

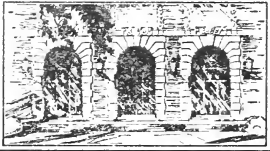


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RARE BOOK ROOM

Elizth Barlow

ANTI-DELPHINE.



A NOVEL.

ANTI - DELPHINE.

A Novel.

FOUNDED ON FACTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

Mrs. BYRON,

(Elizabeth Sturges)

AUTHOR OF *THE BORDERERS, DRELINCOURT AND RODALVI,*

&c. &c.

What is this world? thy school, oh misery!
Where every man is sent to learn to suffer:
And he who knows not that was born for nothing.

YOUNG.

VOL. I.

London:

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1818.

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ANTI-DELPHINE.

LETTER I.

Clementina de St. Far, to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

No, my dear aunt, I am not yet so immersed in dissipation as to forget that I have more important claims on my attention; neither am I so delighted with Paris as to cease to recollect the happy days which I have spent at Bellevue, under your hospitable roof.

VOL. I.

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No, though I am idle, I trust I am not ungrateful; and I will allow you to impute my negligence, in not writing, to any cause rather than to a diminution of my love and esteem for you.

My dear Eugenia continues well and happy; but she is not half so cheerful as I should be, were I so recently married, and particularly to a man so genteel, so handsome, and so passionately attached to me as Monsieur de St. Edmund is to my sister. It must be acknowledged that he is forty-five years of age, and Eugenia is only twenty-two; but that is not a disparity sufficient to form any obstacle to their happiness, especially as my sister is as grave at her years as M. de St. Edmund and I should be if we were to live to the age of a hundred. This is what I tell her, but
instead

instead of being consoled by it, she replies with additional gravity, "Alas, my dear Clementina, have not I reason to dread the gaiety which you so much admire? So different is my own disposition, that I fear M. de St. Edmund cannot long remain ignorant of it; and I should be wretched indeed were I to lose the affections of my husband, from any fault, even though an involuntary one." This, I tell her, can never happen whilst she continues so amiable, and looks so beautiful.

Then comes Monsieur, and deports himself so gallantly! he proposes some new party of pleasure, and tells my sister how happy he is, and how infinitely obliged to her for making him so: she smiles through her tears, gives him her hand, and looks enchantingly. Oh! it must certainly be the most charming thing in the

world to be married, at least in such a country as this, where none but married ladies are taken any notice of. In England, you say, that it is very different; that there the young ladies are all admired, and attended to: whilst the married women, however pretty, and however flattered they may have been, put on matronly manners with their wedding-rings, resigning all hopes and desires of future conquest to those who have been less successful than themselves.

Politeness and attention would certainly reconcile us greatly to celibacy; but, my dear aunt, I do indeed suspect that some change has taken place in the manners of your favorite nation, during your twenty years absence from it; the young Marquis de Mervueil, who is a lively sensible young man, has just returned from spending
the

the winter in the first circles in London, and he assures me, that he rarely observed there any striking examples of very rigid virtue ; and by his account our worthy neighbours will soon so far succeed in their endeavours to imitate us, that it will require the eye of the nicest observer to distinguish the copy from the original. I should not, according to the Marquis's description of England, be of much more consequence there than here ; and I fear that in either country the long line of ancestry on which my dear father so piques himself, will be thought to have lost much of its splendour by the deduction of the estates from which the different titles were derived.

But there is no remedy except patience ; and surely seventeen is too early for despair.

In

In my next I will inform you more particularly how I like the world in reality; which I have often contemplated with delight in imagination. Shall I confess to you that I have already detected myself becoming ill-natured and censorious? But I check the unpleasant propensities as they rise in my bosom, for they remind me too forcibly of a certain sisterhood, among whom, at present, I have not the smallest ambition, my dear aunt, that you should rank

Your most affectionate

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER II.



Clementina de St. Far, to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

WE continue, my dear aunt, very gay and dissipated, notwithstanding the sad condition of the nation ; and notwithstanding the doleful prognostics which every one is willing to make concerning it. Indeed a stranger would be apt to imagine that all the French people were become paralytic, so universal is the shaking of heads ; but I never trouble mine with the melancholy motion, except when I wish

wish to see how gracefully a plume of feathers waves on it ; and I confess that we are too busily engaged in the pursuits of amusement, to have much time to reflect on things of more importance.

We make parties every day to ride, walk, or go on the water. We have cards, music, dancing—in short, genius is exhausted in devising new forms for pleasure ; and our grave Eugenia enters into all with such apparent zest, that I begin to think she has cheated us hitherto, and never till now displayed her real character ; not that you are to infer from this account that she is yet half so lively as your Clementina : I do not meet with many who can rival me in that respect ; and I find such a flow of spirits as I possess, very useful in beginning the world ; for it requires a considerable
share

share to bear the neglect with which the friendless are often treated, even in polished society.

Here is a Madame de Montauban, with whom my sister is much pleased, more so, infinitely, than I am, though I own, I may not be quite impartial in my judgment.

The lady is a widow, and thirty years of age; tall, elegantly formed, and, though not handsome, she dresses so well, and possesses such fascinating manners, that all the gentlemen are charmed with her.

She was left, at the death of her husband, in narrow circumstances; but she has many rich relations, and as she is on very good terms with them, they never suffer her to feel the least inconvenience on this account.

But the complaisance which necessity has compelled her constantly to assume towards those who may have it in their power to assist her, has produced in her the baneful habit of paying respect only to the rich ; and as she knows I cannot be classed in that number, she scarcely gives herself the trouble to treat me with common civility, whilst she overwhelms my sister with the most flattering attentions.

I should not be hurt by her coldness, but she affects at all times to consider me as a mere child, and often insinuates in the presence of my father, that to portionless young women a convent offers a safe and desirable retreat from the dangers of the world. You know, my dear aunt, the repugnance which I always testified to a conventual life, when my father wished

ed

ed me, on the marriage of my sister, to embrace it, though for a short time only. You will, therefore, not be surprised when I confess to you, that the impertinent interference of Madame de Montauban makes me very angry.

I cannot imagine that she really thinks me so childish as she wishes to make me appear ; on the contrary, I believe she perceives that I can make very womanly observations on her civilities to M. de St. Edmund, as well as to my sister : I am afraid gallantry and avarice are her ruling passions ; though I suspect that she is ingenious enough to render the former subservient to the latter.

She certainly makes me uneasy, and the more so, as I dare not mention my suspicions to my sister, lest they might
make

make her so likewise : she is so charming in her present cheerful disposition, that I would not ruffle it on any consideration ; and, to do M. de St. Edmund justice, he is so tender and polite in his behaviour towards her, that, if he continue it, he cannot fail to inspire her gentle bosom with love, which is alone wanting to complete her felicity.

Our good friend M. de Beaumont used to say, that a woman ought to feel no passion but gratitude ; and that to love, she need only to be loved. I know not if the whole of his position be just, but surely no woman of sensibility and virtuous inclinations can be tenderly esteemed by a worthy man, without participating in the affection which she inspires.

I hope this will be my sister's case,
my

my dear sister's, to whom I am so much indebted, who has so well supplied to me the loss of our angel mother, and for whose cares I can never be sufficiently grateful.

I sometimes fear that her too great gentleness of disposition, and her affection for my father and me, induced her to accept M. de St. Edmund's hand, without sufficiently consulting her inclination. She saw that my father's wishes were interested, even beyond what he acknowledged, in the completion of the match ; she considered that by gratifying those wishes she should relieve him from a load of anxiety, and secure an asylum to me, for whom she had already sacrificed the first bloom of her youth in retirement.

May Heaven reward the motives
which

which prompted her obedience; and may she never repent of the choice which she accepted rather than made!

M. de St. Edmund is generous to excess, as he proved himself to be by marrying the portionless daughter of a fallen house; he is brave, kind, liberal, and well-informed: but, alas! he is gay—and in that little monosyllable what mischief may not be contained! Would that fashion had never authorized us to soften the names of vices, whilst the vicious remain unchanged! But am not I too severe? M. de St. Edmund has not at least deserved that epithet since his marriage; and surely recollection of the past, may bring conviction of its fruitlessness, that conviction may produce repentance, and repentance may occasion reformation.

But

But habits are so easily acquired, and so difficult to be overcome, that even with the greatest affection for his wife, a man who has been what the world will now only call gay, cannot at once wholly reform. For he who suddenly emerges from a state of constant inebriety, whilst he laments the effects of his intemperance, resorts to a repetition of the poisonous draught to stimulate his enervated frame, and enable him to rouse himself from the dreadful languor, the cause of which he still cannot be prevailed on to discontinue.—Alas ! all Eugenia's worth may not preserve her from affliction, which would be rendered more severe by the sensibility that now makes her so engaging ! But I am willing to write on any subject rather than on this, and as I believe that nothing draws us more readily from contemplating the misfortunes of others than the

the recital of our own, I will complain to you of the vexatious conduct, which the young Marquis de Mertueil, whom I have mentioned in former letters, observes towards me.

We generally meet him in our parties ; and as he is really the politest and most agreeable young man I have hitherto seen, I perhaps may have received his attentions with more pleasure than those of many others, who when they pay a female a compliment, appear to think that she is under an obligation to them for the trouble which they have taken.

But the Marquis has offended me of late by the inconsistency of his behaviour : in company he affects a distant and ceremonious civility ; when he meets me alone, he disgusts me by the extravagance of his professions.

Is

Is this generous, my dear aunt ? is it honourable ? Little as your Clementina may know the world, giddy as she may appear in it, she is not so ignorant as to imagine that honour can ever require the garb of mystery, nor is she so thoughtless as to admire the man who thus insults her by assuming it.

Last night we had a little dance ; I went out of the ball-room to give some trifling orders to the domestics, and met the Marquis in the anti-chamber : " Ah ! lovely Clementina," said he, seizing my hand, " how fortunate I am to meet you thus ! how happy you can render me by favouring me even for a few moments only, with the delightful conversation which charms me still more powerfully than your beauty." To this high-flown compliment I replied, that I should be very
willing

willing to render him happy, when I could do it without any trouble or inconvenience to myself, but that not then being the case, I desired he would instantly release me, as I was impatient to execute a commission from my sister, that I might rejoin the dance as soon as possible.

He called me inexorable, and himself miserable ; but notwithstanding the excess of his grief, he could crawl into the room, and attach himself so closely to a Mademoiselle de Leon, a young lady of great fortune, that he forgot to pay your poor Clementina the compliment of soliciting her hand during any part of the evening : an attention, which politeness to my sister alone demanded from him. However, my dear madam, I did not regret the omission, as I was most agreeably engaged all the evening with a
young

young Englishman of the name of Seymour : he is the intimate friend of your Henry, our dear cousin, with whom we so ardently desire to become again acquainted, and from whose friendship we hope to receive so much pleasure.

Mr. Seymour assures us that Henry will be enabled to leave London very soon. I think he has now resided there nearly seven years : what an age for fond parents to be separated from their only child ! and particularly when that child is so much all that his parents can desire, as Mr. Seymour describes Henry to be.

I have written a long letter, my dear aunt, and prudently entered into my own griefs and vexations in the first part, reserving the pleasing intelligence of your son as a *bonne bouche*
at

at the last. You may tell my uncle that I feel particularly happy on his account, as I know that nothing but the return of your son can console him for the absence of your

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER III.

Clementine de St. Far to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

ALAS! my dear aunt, my dislike to Madame de Montauban was too well founded. Base woman! taking advantage of M. de St. Edmund's weakness, she is endeavouring to estrange his affections from my sister, just when the constant display of them began to make the desired impression on her tender and good heart. I am already weary
of

of the society which I was so impatient to enter. In the quiet retirement of Bellevue, I was unwilling to believe the accounts of the vices and treacheries of the world. How often have I repeated with enthusiasm from your favourite English poet,

“Perish the lore, which deadens young desire,”

Alas ! I may now add,

“Indulge gay hope and fancy’s pleasing fire,

“Fancy and hope too soon shall of themselves
expire.”

For if in polished society we do not often meet with undisguised vices, or lawless crimes, there are still so many selfish arts and mean deceptions continually practised, that the unfortunate novice in them is filled with disappointment and distrust.

I had

I had just sent my last letter to you, when Madame de Montauban, who preserves the most perfect familiarity with my sister, called to inquire after her health, hoping that the exertions of the preceding evening had not fatigued her; I was in my dressing-room which adjoins my sister's; and, hearing who was her visitor, I did not give myself the trouble to leave it.

When the lady arose to depart, M. de St. Edmund could not do less than hand her to her carriage; in going down the stairs I overheard him inquire if she had been amused by the dance; imagine my surprise and confusion when she answered, "I was more than amused, I was happy. Alas! I am even more so than I could wish, in the society of those with whom I am but too much charmed; and it is only in the solitude of my own house
that

that I lament the illusion with which I suffer myself to be cheated." I was breathless with consternation ; for though her words might be deemed general, yet I was convinced by M. de St. Edmund's answer, that the looks by which they were accompanied, were sufficiently particular : for after a momentary pause he said in a soft tone, " Fortunate are all whom Madame de Montauban favours with her esteem, and happy indeed the man who may hope to obtain it by the most ardent and respectful attentions." I heard no more.—For a few minutes I remained almost petrified ; but recovering myself, I went to my sister, who was unconscious of the injury which had just been offered to her, and whose countenance exhibited, as usual, the undisturbed serenity of a peaceful mind.

Before

Before I could speak, M. de St. Edmund returned. "What a charming woman is Madame de Montauban!" said he, as he entered the room. "She is indeed," replied my sister, "and I consider myself fortunate in possessing her as a friend."—"You are so, my dear Eugenia," he answered, "and I hope that you will study by every attention to retain her as one." This was too much; my face and neck were covered with crimson, and feeling almost suffocated, I ran to the window, and hastily threw it open. The action could not pass unobserved. M. de St. Edmund coloured as deeply as I had; whilst my sister affectionately inquired if I were ill. I could only answer by a flood of tears, which quite alarmed her; but I soon recovered utterance, and said that the fatigue of the preceding evening, joined to want of rest, had occasioned a mo-

mentary depression of my spirits, but that I had even then recovered them, and that she knew I was not likely to suffer long from their absence. She replied with her usual kindness, and Monsieur came to me in the most friendly manner, and embracing me said, "I should be sorry indeed were my sweet Clementina to lose her charming vivacity ; for even did I not esteem her for her own worth, I could never cease to do it for the sake of a wife, who becomes every day more inestimable to me."

He said this pointedly ; fearing, as I perceived, that I might have overheard his conversation with the friend to whom Eugenia was to be so attentive, and therefore wishing to remove every anxious doubt from my breast. The intention was kind, and in part succeeded. But is it not wonderful,

derful, my dear aunt, that M. de St. Edmund, who is certainly a sensible man, should not immediately see the disgusting indelicacy of this woman's behaviour? Does it not teach us that no strength of mind is proof against flattery, that subtle poison, which never fails of effect where skilfully administered?

My sister soon after went with her husband to visit one of his relations; and I not feeling my spirits quite recovered, declined accompanying them. This was destined to be a day of vexation to me. They had not been gone ten minutes, when the Marquis called, and, hearing that I was at home, desired to be shown up stairs. When he saw that I was alone, he commenced his usual style of conversation, and affected to dwell on the mortification which he had received the preceding

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evening,

evening, in not having been favoured with my hand during any part of it. Vexed at his intrusion, and disgusted by his hypocrisy, I replied with no small degree of peevishness, "It is rather surprising, if you consider your not having danced with me as so great an evil, that you did not once endeavour to avert it, by asking me to become your partner." The coxcomb's eyes sparkled at this foolish speech ; and taking my hand, he exclaimed with the most insufferable air of self-conceit, "Beautiful Clementina, you look so bewitching in anger, that I can almost pardon myself for causing it by the appearance of neglect ; but assure me of your forgiveness, and never again shall you have reason to complain of my inattention." At any other time I might have laughed at his absurdity ; but I was not then in the humour to be amused by folly, and

and felt only provoked at his effrontery, and intentional misinterpretation of my words ; I was going to answer him with the contempt which I thought he deserved, but the effort was too much for my already weakened spirits, and before I could speak, my tears, which had been but ill suppressed on his entrance, again fell, and my voice was lost in sobs. The Marquis was astonished ; and, wholly thrown off his guard by so unexpected a scene, he ventured to insult me by a proposal which I flatter myself had he been master of his reason he durst not have made. “ My sweetest Clementina,” said he, hastily rising and endeavouring again to take the hand which I had indignantly drawn from him, “ why these tears ? they wound me to the soul. You well know that I adore you—I shall never cease to do so ; but you know also my situation ;

ation;—dependent on a sordid parent who scarcely allows me sufficient to support the appearance which my rank demands. I am aware that he looks to my marriage as a mean of adding to the wealth and consequence of my name; and I am too fatally convinced that were I to form an engagement contrary to his inclinations he would wholly incapacitate me from providing for the dear object of my love in a style suitable to her worth, or to my esteem. Your father, Clementina, is anxious to see you established, the Marquis de Liancourt has professed himself your slave. Happy man! he can lay his fortune at the feet of one who would add lustre to a diadem; need I say how enviable I consider his destiny? In accepting him you will make M. de St. Far happy; and, oh! suffer me to hope that the ardour and sincerity of my passion
might

might fill the void which in your sensible heart the absence of a lively affection for your husband might occasion.—You are displeased, my adored Clementina; perhaps you think that the love which will admit another to share its treasures, must be weak and unworthy of its object; may I then fondly hope that she whom I adore will soar above the prejudices of narrow minds, and live for love alone?”—

He was proceeding, but my patience was exhausted, or rather my faculties began to recover from the confusion into which they had been thrown, and I recollected myself sufficiently to say with great composure, “Henceforward, Sir, never insult me with your attention; for be assured, that in public or private, it will be received by me with the most undisguised contempt; and let me advise
you

you in future, not to listen so readily to the dictates of your vanity, as in the present instance it has certainly most egregiously deceived you."

I then left the room, and retired to my own apartment, to give vent to my tears, whilst I saw, in melancholy forebodings, the future fate of my sister, and deplored my own, which thus subjected me to the insults of licentiousness. Alas ! my dear aunt, what a situation would mine have been, had I loved this ungenerous man as his vanity taught him to believe ! Perhaps the dictates of my heart might have proved more powerful than those of my judgment ; or if not, I should have felt all the misery of one who continues to love where she has ceased to esteem. I am truly thankful that this is not my case ; I confess that my pride (I trust not an improper pride)

pride) is shocked, and perhaps my vanity may be a little mortified ; but the pangs of wounded affection are not mine, and the discovery of the base principles of one man will make me careful not to put it in the power of any other to insult me by the avowal of similar sentiments.

Indeed, my dear aunt, I thought that my cheeks would have been absolutely scorched with indignation, had not a deluge of tears fortunately quenched the flames which glowed upon them.

I wept the more because I was condemned to weep alone, without even the power of complaining, that common though unavailing privilege of the unhappy. At length I resolved to trouble you, my dearest aunt, with an account of my vexations ; I know

that you will listen to me, and will advise me how to act under them. In this you will, I am sure, agree with me, that it will be prudent to conceal from my sister every thing which might distress her; and therefore your opinion shall be a law, and obeyed as such by your most affectionate, though distressed

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER IV.



Clementina de St. Far to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

YOUR kind letter, my dear aunt, has been a cordial to my drooping spirits, and most gratefully do I thank you for it. I cannot but ardently wish to recal the happy period, when my sister and I spent twelve months under your hospitable roof, without one sigh but what the remembrance of our beloved mother drew from us.

It

It is not yet seven months since we left you, in consequence of my sister's marriage, and I have been unhappy one-third of the time. I am almost ashamed of confessing this, even to you, my dear aunt, as I have not forgotten the rapturous anxiety with which I looked forward to revisiting Paris. But time changes all things; and, young as I am, I have already seen the effects of his influence. When we resided here some years since, I was, it is true, too young to be introduced into company, but I can well remember that our entertainments were splendid, that my father was courted, my mother idolized, and that my sister and I were caressed by all around us. Judge, then, of the surprise with which the different reception I found on my return here inspired me: I do not pretend to say that I met not
with

with attention ; a very few personal advantages will always, whilst they are new, ensure the unmeaning civility of the idle and frivolous ; but I soon found, that when the attraction of novelty was worn off, I ceased to command the admiration which I saw unremittingly lavished on those who were more blessed with the goods of fortune than I was. I could not be insensible of the change, nor was it difficult to discover the cause of it. When I was at Paris five years since, my father held several lucrative and honourable employments about the king ; and my mother, exclusive of her high birth, personal charms (in which my loved Eugenia so much resembles her), unbounded accomplishments, and elegant manners, was no less in favour with the queen, who, unfortunate as she now is, was at that time the admiration of every court

court in Europe, and the darling of the French nation. How changed is all now! My mother dead, and my father reduced by party rage to a mere private nobleman, whose estates (of which the produce is almost inadequate to the support of his rank) must at his death descend to a distant relation: when, added to these considerations, we reflect that the very principles and conduct for which he was formerly esteemed, are now become displeasing to many of those with whom we are obliged to associate, it is no wonder that my poor father is often coldly received, and that his daughter participates in his mortification. Would that I could only save him from feeling it! I am wounded to the soul, my dear aunt, when I see this good man, who never assumed consequence from prosperity, treated with neglect in comparative

parative adversity. His voice, which formerly never failed to command respectful attention, is now, too frequently, either not listened to or interrupted; and even those who are placed the nearest to him, seeing of how little consequence he is made to appear, affect to be attending to conversation in some other part of the room, lest his should be directed to them. Happily my father possesses that dignity which cannot be degraded, that fortitude which cannot be subdued. In every company there will be some who can appreciate merit; and I should be unjust to Mr. Seymour, were I not to acknowledge that he is one to whom it never appeals in vain. Rich in the independence of his country, he thinks for himself, speaks as he thinks, and acts according to his feelings. His attentions

tentions have often restored me to a proper and necessary sense of my own consequence, and have more than once taught me to rise superior to the petty attacks of malice.

Sometimes I think that my sister is sensible of the different reception which we meet with ; but as I cannot bear the idea of making her uneasy, I always appear cheerful in her presence ; and as M. de St. Edmund is universally esteemed, and his society courted, she is of course never exposed to mortifying treatment, and consequently may not suspect that we are subjected to it. But indeed, my dear aunt, I can never be very unhappy whilst I behold my Eugenia so much the reverse. M. de St. Edmund behaves to her at present exactly as I should wish ; and seeing her contented

tented and universally admired, all my own mortifications appear trifling, and are forgotten.

If my sister were only beautiful and accomplished, I should not love her so tenderly ; but I know her heart. I cannot forget how for four years she supplied the place of a mother to me ; how, heedless of her charms, she secluded herself from society to prepare me for it ; how assiduously, knowing the diminution of my father's income, she endeavoured to make my attainments emulate her own. I cannot forget with what patient industry she taught, with what tenderness she reproofed, with what affection she indulged me. My father ceased to remember, in her company, the loss of a wife whom he had idolized, and whose charms he saw revived in his daughter. The servants revered
her

her as their mistress ; the poor blessed her as their benefactress. But it is as unnecessary to describe to you the beauties of her mind, as it would be to dwell on those of her person ; both are too conspicuous to be easily concealed.

In her union with M. de St. Edmund, she certainly consulted not her heart ; that was untouched : she felt no tender partiality for him, but he possessed the first place in her regard. His long attachment to her, and his generosity in voluntarily resigning to me the portion he received with her, gained her esteem ; and as the transition from esteem to love is easy, I trust his attentions, if continued, will meet their just reward.

My father believes them to be tenderly attached to each other. He
told

told me so yesterday with tears of joy ; adding, “ I only pray that I may live to see my Clementina as happily situated : I should then be impatient to rejoin the angel whom I have lost, and should think that my lot on earth had been enviable, notwithstanding the malice of my enemies, who have sought to embitter it.” Is not he, my dear aunt, a kind parent ? his affection is manifested as much in the merest trifles, as in concerns of the utmost consequence. I wish you could see, when we are in company, with what pleasure he seeks to turn the conversation to any subject on which he knows we are qualified to speak ; how kindly he endeavours to bring me into notice, by asking my opinion on every topic, on which he thinks me capable of conversing ; and how, by innumerable graces and attentions, he constantly adds lustre to

to his virtues. Ah ! you will readily believe that his comfort and happiness are every day objects of increasing consequence to me.

Mr. Seymour has a packet for you from your son Henry ; he will send it to you as soon as he can meet with a safe conveyance ; for though the want of one be rather a disgrace to a civilized country, yet the increasing turbulence of the times makes the transmitting of letters an object of serious consideration.

Mr. Seymour is very amiable : he has gained much of my esteem since my adventure with the odious little Marquis, and every day contributes to increase it.

Tell my uncle that I am certain he is much more dull without me than
he

he is willing to confess ; and I have the vanity to think that you also, my dear aunt, would feel infinite pleasure in embracing once more

Your ever affectionate

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER V.



Charles Seymour to Henry de Tourville.

Paris.

WHAT advantage is to be derived from a man's going abroad, if he never lets his friends know what he sees or hears? I confess, my dear De Tourville, I have been so long without writing to you, that you can make no remark too severe on my idleness, nor do I know what excuse to frame for it. Suppose I tell
you

you that I have been busily engaged in preparing an account of my travels, and that you may expect soon to see advertised, "In the press, and speedily will be published, a Descriptive and Picturesque Tour through France, Italy, and Germany, ornamented with illustrative Views, taken on the Spot, and splendidly coloured: the whole, on hot-pressed Paper, and in a superb Type !!!" Then, with hacknied descriptions of rivers, and the shores of the rivers, of the rising and setting sun, improbable accounts of robberies and assassinations, copious extracts from tedious topographical histories, inappropriate quotations from fashionable poets, some marvellous adventures, and store of sentiments and sensibility, to be plentifully lavished on every occasion, however ridiculous, or foreign to the subject, you would have the complete

plete book of a modern tourist, professing to describe the natural and political history of a country, and the manners, customs, and characters of its inhabitants!!!

But you know too well my contempt of these gentlemen authors, to believe that I should add to their number, which is already so great that it is difficult to decide whether their folly in publishing, or that of the public in perusing their works, be the most conspicuous. To confess the truth, I am so delightfully amused here with two charming women, that I know not when I shall gain resolution to pursue my travels. I can never study the sublime and beautiful to more advantage than I do now; and I much doubt whether the finest models of antiquity can excel, or even equal,
the

the elegant specimens of living forms which I see here among the moderns. I am certain, however, that the most enthusiastic lover of the fine arts never gazed with such passionate admiration on the unrivalled performances of the first masters, as I feel for these “cunning patterns of excelling nature.” But you will ask who these enchantresses are; and as I know you are not remarkably patient, I will immediately inform you; and the more readily, as I do not fear rivalry from you, which is more than I can say of any other man to whom I have mentioned this matchless pair, who are no less personages than the cousins of the illustrious Henry de Tourville, my very good friend. Now, my dear fellow, do not disclaim the relationship, and cry, “impossible!” for it is strictly true; and you are raised not

a little in my estimation by being allied to such perfection.

As I understand you have never seen your lovely cousins since they were mere children, I will have the honour to describe them to you ; not only for the pleasure I shall derive from the agreeable employment, but likewise as it will accustom me to write with ease on subjects requiring a fine flow of language, and abundance of compound epithets, which are now so much the rage. The eldest of your cousins, whose name, as you probably know, is Eugenia, is tall and most elegantly formed ; there is in her carriage such ineffable dignity and grace, that when she enters a room, an involuntary air of deference and respect is visible in the countenances of all present. Her
beauty

beauty is of the pensive Madona cast ; her fine dark eyes alternately languish in the most exquisite softness of sensibility, or sparkle with the utmost brilliancy of expression.

Her accomplishments are as numerous and as perfect as her beauties. When she plays on her harp to an attentive crowd, she resembles St. Cecilia, except that her admiring auditors are mere mortals, who know not whether their ears be more ravished by the celestial sounds floating round them, than their eyes are dazzled by the fair and finely proportioned hands and arms, which move in the most graceful attitudes over the trembling strings. She has all the fire of an Italian with all the melting tenderness of a Spanish female. I should inevitably have bowed for life before so sweet a shrine, but unfortunately

D 2

she

she is already married ; and I am yet so much of an Englishman as to think this circumstance an impediment to my devoirs.

In this dilemma, I found that the wounds which I had received from one sister, were only to be healed by contemplating the charms of the other ; and these are indeed sufficiently powerful to divert my mind from every consideration, except that of endeavouring to render myself worthy of possessing them. She is a Hebe ! and in her presence only love, joy, and perpetual youth can be thought of. Clementina, like her sister, is a traitress to her native country, and will not be indebted to it even for beauty. She is fairer than any woman whom I have yet seen in the warmer climates, possessing all the finest bloom of an English complexion ;

complexion; and, to convince the observer that it is unborrowed, she contrives to let it mantle on her cheek in such rich and uncontrolled suffusions, that I am never weary of watching the sweetly-varying herald of her thoughts. Blue eyes, flaxen tresses, and a countenance the most animated, tender, and ingenuous that nature ever formed, complete the portrait of this lovely girl, whose talents, accomplishments, and manners are no way inferior to those of her amiable sister. In short, Henry, I must adopt the words of Benedict—"When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married:" for such havoc have the native graces and unaffected virtues of the interesting Clementina made in my heart, that I must avail myself of the *lex talionis*, and insist on hers in return for the loss of mine, which
she

she has wounded so severely, that it will never again be of use to its owner.

Yet I am not so blinded by passion as to be unable to see that the lady has her humours, and I am afraid that she imperiously expects the tribute of admiration, to which all, however, must acknowledge the justice of her claim. I am perhaps wrong in being thus severe on her; for, so far from seeking it from me, she receives it with all the indifference imaginable, even when paid voluntarily. But here is a little Marquis, a grinning capering puppy, who seems to possess the power of interesting her infinitely more than many others, than whom he is certainly less deserving: not that his attentions appear to afford her pleasure; on the contrary, I have seen
her

her lovely countenance overshadowed with vexation, or glowing with anger, when he has attempted to render them particular. But is not even marked displeasure more flattering to those towards whom it is expressed, than indifference? I dare say the Marquis, at least, thinks it is; for he seems to have an excellent opinion of himself, and Frenchman-like (pardon, Henry, the nationality of this English remark), if there be two ways of construing a look or an expression, always follows the mode of translating it which best accords with his wishes.

Would that she distinguished me from others, even though it were only by her frowns! But I am not an object of sufficient consequence in her eyes. Her countenance is the faithful index of her heart, and I vainly

vainly look for emotions to be expressed in the one which have never been felt in the other.

I declare to you, De Tourville, that if she loved a man of sense, I should rejoice to see her happy; but I cannot patiently think of her attachment to this contemptible little Marquis. She, however, probably believes him to be a man of sense and a gentleman; and as happiness is certainly ideal, may she find it with him, if she intend to look to him as the source of it!

I possibly might not have been happy with her; for I repeat, that I suspect her of a boundless desire of admiration, and a wish to make her exaction of it entirely arbitrary. Her brother-in-law, M. de St. Edmund, who is a most agreeable man, pays
her

her at all times a degree of attention highly flattering. Yet, would you believe it? the unconscionable girl is actually angry if he be civil to any other female. I can see him even watch an opportunity of her absence to converse for a few moments with a Madame de Montauban, a very pleasing woman, who is extremely intimate with his wife. You may judge from this specimen what a termagant she is. Yet I fear, that, like the lover described by our immortal Shakespeare, whose beauties your knowledge of his language well enables you to understand, I shall contemplate her faults till I believe them virtues in her. Faults, indeed, she has none; for, except in the instances I have mentioned, she seems as careless of her charms as they are irresistible.

Playful, gentle, and tender in her manners, is it surprising that she is an object of universal admiration? or that she, happy in the innocent vivacity of youth, should accept that admiration with indifference,

“As if secure of all beholders’ hearts,
Neglecting, she could take them.”

You will think me an inconsistent fellow, and that I have drawn an inconsistent character of my fair one, but I know not the exact situation of my own heart; still less of hers. I can only say, with Hamlet,

“I have of late, but wherefore I know not,
Lost all mirth, foregone all customary exercises;
And indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition,
That this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me
A sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy,
The air, this brave o’erhanging firmament,
This majestical roof, fretted with golden fire,
Why it appears no other thing to me, than

A foul

A foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

Man delights not me, nor woman neither."

I hope this will be the last letter I shall address to you in England. Your father and mother impatiently expect you; and your cousins are so eager to see you, that I maliciously described you to them as an Adonis in appearance, and an Apollo in accomplishments, trusting that disappointment would create disgust, and occasion comparisons to be drawn accordingly in favour of him who, notwithstanding his treachery in this instance, will in every other be always found

Your very sincere friend,

and obedient servant,

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LETTER VI.



Madame de Montauban to Monsieur de St. Edmund.

Thursday Noon.

It is, Sir, the privilege of our sex to vary our inclinations, without incurring from yours the charge of inconsistency : I am therefore resolved to avail myself of my right to be whimsical, for our advantages are too few to be neglected.

You

You will guess by this prelude that I have resolved to accept the invitation which you so politely gave me to make one of your party to Clairville.

I was in truth engaged for the evening of to-morrow, to a concert and supper at the Marchioness de Merteuil's : but really as the summer approaches, I feel utterly unequal to the fatigue of being confined in heated rooms, for the sake of music to which none listen, though all affect to commend it. I frankly confess, that I cannot make myself agreeable at these dilettanti meetings ; for I can counterfeit no raptures, when I am almost overpowered with sleep at the conclusion of a stupid concerto ; and I am too often silent, when all around me are complimenting a persevering performer, on the facility of fingering which he has displayed.

displayed. I hate compositions where harmony and feeling are sacrificed to bring together every jarring sound and harsh transition, in order to shew under the term brilliancy, the mechanical strength, quickness and correctness which may be gained by practice, even where taste and ear have been totally denied. I sometimes, indeed, endeavour to add my quota of praise on these occasions, but unfortunately I can seldom finish the speech I reserve for them, without yawning, being as weary of uttering words which I do not mean, as of listening to sounds which I cannot approve.

These severe remarks concerning music will account for my preferring a rural ramble with friends whom I esteem, to adding to the number of a meeting in which, though nominally assembled to indulge in harmony, every

every one may be governed by discordant principles. Perhaps you wonder why I should not rather address myself to Madame de St. Edmund than to you : I know that she is engaged this morning with the Countess de Mirepoix, and I wish to transmit my intention of accompanying her to-morrow, as soon as possible, lest her party should be made up ; if that be already the case, let me know, that I may not intrude myself into it.

This afternoon I intend to pass rationally, and shall devote it to the study of your favorite Crebillon. My pleasure in perusing his lively works would have been considerably augmented by the illustration of your judicious remarks ; and had the charming Eugenia been disengaged, I might, as I know you are that *rara avis*, a domestic husband, have hoped that
you

you would have had the goodness to have read to us, whilst we worked at our looms like the diligent and illustrious dames of old. Not that there are the same inducements to industry in these degenerate modern days ; we might, indeed, embroider scarfs, but where should we find knights worthy to receive them ? Yet had I a scarf prepared, I think I know one on whom I could bestow it, who would not have disgraced the purest days of chivalry ; when valour, mercy, and courtesy, were as much the characteristics of one sex, as gentleness, purity, and constancy were of the other. Alas ! I fly from the painful realities of life, to wander in the flowery fields of fiction, for in them only can I find happiness : in them I may contemplate virtue without reproach—in the world I see only folly or vice. I condemn them, and am censured for being severe. I

was

was not always so, but lately society has disgusted me, and I consequently judge more impartially of its frivolities than I did when I was thoughtless enough to be amused by them. But why declaim against society, to one whose graces always ensure him a welcome in all its circles? It is as ridiculous as it would be for a blind man to assure one who enjoys the blessing of sight, that the beauties of nature are not worthy of observation.

If Madame de St. Edmund still intends to go to Clairville to-morrow, pray inform me.—I hope she will, as I am weary of the world, and languish for a temporary seclusion from it with those whom I love; in which number I frankly acknowledge that you will, for the sake of your wife, ever be classed by, Sir, your most obedient

SERAPHINA DE MONTAUBAN.

LETTER VII.

Monsieur de St. Edmund to Madame de Montauban.

Thursday Afternoon.

PERMIT me, Madam, to address you in the language of our graceful monarch, Henry the IVth; and to say to you as he did to the fair Gabrielle, "Two hours after the arrival of the courier who will deliver you this, you will see a cavalier who esteems you much." Throughout the elegant little epistle, from which I have quoted the above, I could

I could adopt his sentiments without doing violence to my own. I am not, indeed, king of France and Navarre, but if I were, I would ask no higher privilege for my crown than that of chusing my Gabrielle, and then, I think, even the gallant and fortunate Henry might have regarded my choice with envy.

I am at a loss how to excuse my presumption in asking permission to intrude upon your solitude this evening ; but to know that you are alone, and reading Crebillon, is a temptation infinitely too strong for me to resist. I also am solitary, for Madame de St. Edmund has spent the whole of the day with the Countess de Mirepoix, and will not return till a late hour. For her sake, then, I entreat you, Madam, to suffer me to pass in your society, the moments which, as you are
pleased

pleased to rally me on my being that insipid character called a domestic husband, I will honestly confess I must otherwise spend heavily in the absence of Madame de St. Edmund. I ask this favour in her name, but it is not that I am too proud to owe you an obligation in my own. No, with whatever kindnesses you may be pleased to load me, you shall find that I have humility to receive them with all thankfulness.

I shall see you, then, this evening. We shall read "*Les Egaremens du Cœur, et de l'Esprit.*" My heart has already learnt to wander. If it had not, I should, perhaps, be more deserving of the epithet "domestic," which you, Madam, so often bestow on your most devoted servant

PIERRE DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER VIII.



Madame de St. Edmund to Madame de Montauban.

Friday Morning.

I AM really sorry, my dear friend, that on your first refusal to accompany me to Clairville, I immediately relinquished the design of going thither, and resolved to devote the day to my father, who has long wished Clementina and me to pay with him a visit to an old friend who lives in the suburbs. But I understand you feel a violent inclination

inclination for this excursion, and I cannot bear the idea that you should be disappointed. I wish, therefore, that you would excuse my absence, and permit Monsieur de St. Edmund and Clementina to supply my place. I can easily apologize to my father's friend, for the non-attendance of the latter, and Monsieur de St. Edmund is not acquainted with him; oblige me then, my dear friend, in this, and I shall spend a day as agreeably in the suburbs of Paris, as you will, I hope, in the delightful environs of Clairville; for I shall then know that I am obliging my father, and that you and my dear Clementina are gratified.

Monsieur de St. Edmund told me last night with much triumph, that he had won three games at chess of you during your tête à tête: but my admiration

ration of his success was considerably abated, when he added that you were only a learner, and that he had engaged to be your instructor in that interesting and rational game. I told him that it would have been wiser, and more likely to inspire you with a partiality for it, if he had suffered you to be the victor. But the idea of conquest, even in trifles, is too gratifying to vanity to be relinquished, and it shews us, my dear, how little the men are to be trusted, for they will avail themselves of an advantage whenever it is offered to them, without making any allowance for the ignorance or inexperience by which it may have been occasioned.

Can I conclude better than with this moral reflection? I will only add that I can never say any thing
more

more true than that I am with the
most perfect esteem

Very sincerely your's,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER IX.



Madame de Montauban to Madame de St. Edmund.

Friday Morning.

No, my dear friend, I am not so mere a woman as to suffer my wish for an object to increase in proportion as obstacles occur to prevent my obtaining it.

It is true, I was anxious, perhaps to a degree of childishness, to spend the day in the country.

Even now, the bright beams of the sun falling on my paper redouble my aversion, from the idea of a glare of wax-lights in July. A refreshing breeze wafts deliciously into my apartment, and almost tempts me abroad to enjoy its coolness; for I anticipate the heat of the Marchioness de Mertueil's crowded rooms this evening, and I feel already suffocated.

I own I cannot prefer the scrapings of a Count or the screamings of a Countess to the delightful harmony of nature, or to that voluptuous silence which, amidst her beauties, is more pleasing to a mind of sensibility than even the sweetest sounds. But I must go, though tormented by the pains of a severe head-ache.

I do not consider myself of sufficient

ficient importance to behave with apparent rudeness ; and, after having assured the Marchioness that nothing but a positive engagement in the country should have prevented my having the honour of waiting on her, I should not wish to risk offending her, by suffering her to hear that I preferred remaining alone in my own house, to meeting all the world in her's.

There is still one way by which I may extricate myself from this *embarras*, and that will be by paying a visit to my uncle, Monsieur de la Ville, at his chateau. Monsieur de St. Edmund is acquainted with him : if he be disengaged, and will escort me, I am certain that my uncle will be much gratified by seeing him.

But I will on no account deprive you of Clementina's society, particularly in a visit which appears, from your account, to be more of duty than of pleasure; as her vivacity may in that case be a very useful addition to your own.

If, then, Monsieur de St. Edmund will give me the pleasure of his company, it must be on the express condition of making no other alteration in your party. I would not even take him from it, if you had not assured me that he was unacquainted with the friend whom you are going to visit.

I am afraid you will think that I abound in the fickleness which, in the beginning of this epistle, I affected to disclaim. Let my severe headache excuse it; and believe me capable

pable of the greatest constancy when
I declare myself,

My dear Madam,

Unalterably your's,

SERAPHINA DE MONTAUBAN.

LETTER X.



Monsieur de St. Edmund to Madame de Montauban.

Tuesday Morning.

I MUST for ever, Madam, revere the venerable chateau of Monsieur de la Ville; for it was there that I became really acquainted with the worth of one who in society fascinates the understanding, but reserves for retirement the subduing of the heart. In society, the number of your admirers affords security to each of them individually

vidually. The most confident can scarcely flatter himself with the hope of success, where he has so many rivals; nor dare the most presumptuous hazard particular attentions, where jealousy prompts the watchfulness of so many eyes. But what security against your charms is there for the unfortunate, though doubtless envied, man, who contemplates them in retirement, where they appear to such infinite advantage! In society you eclipse every other female; in retirement you make it forgotten that any other exists. In society you surprize by your talents, dazzle by your wit, and captivate by your graces; in retirement you subdue by your softness, charm by the tenderness, which can only then be called forth, and fascinate by every varied power to please.

Do

Do not deny me the consolation of praising perfections of which I am unhappily too sensible. Permit me, this evening, to inquire in person concerning your health. I was afraid yesterday that you were fatigued by the length of your ride. You sighed frequently; and the vivacity with which you had enchanted Monsieur de la Ville quite forsook you. Am I too presumptuous in thus betraying my anxiety? Oh! permit me to plead my excuse, which, if it avail not, punish me in any way but by banishment from your presence; for in that only could you command, and I refuse to obey.

You see, Madam, notwithstanding your lively railleries, I am not quite the domestic man you would persuade me to believe myself; and in justice to Madame de St. Edmund, I ought
to

to add also, that she is not one of those unwise ladies, who, in order, I suppose, to make home more agreeable to their husbands, always receive them with frowns after a temporary absence from it. No: she is ever amiable; and if even her own merit were less conspicuous, that of having gained your friendship, would always exalt her in the eyes of him who has the happiness to subscribe himself,

Madam,

Your most devoted

Humble servant,

PIERRE DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XI.

Madame de Montauban to Monsieur de St. Edmund.

Tuesday Noon.

THOSE who maintain that matrimony has not altered the gallant Monsieur de St. Edmund, would certainly be convinced of their error, were they to know that he had written an epistle to a lady, professedly complimentary, and concluded it with an eulogium on his wife!!

The

The subject, it must be confessed, is rather obsolete, but for its singularity well deserves to be revived. However, I am glad to learn that your protracted visit at the chateau did not occasion any remarks which might have induced you to repent of your politeness, especially as I have thought, since our return, that Madame de St. Edmund has looked coldly on me: but it may be that my anxiety to preserve her friendship renders me suspicious of the least diminution of it; or perhaps it is that the most amiable women must be allowed some capricious moments; and, indeed, the sensibility of our sex is such, that a female may often appear ill-humoured, when in fact she is only unhappy.

You have expressed your admiration of the chateau de la Ville, just
in

time to enable me to judge of your sincerity. My uncle was so charmed with your company, that he cannot be easy until you promise to favour him with it again, and to add to his pleasure, by introducing Madame de St. Edmund to his chateau, with which, I have no doubt, she will be charmed.

I have this morning received a letter from him, requesting me to fix an early day for a visit, and to form a party to spend some time with him. He has inclosed a list of the friends whom he wishes me to invite; but its length prevents me from executing this part of his commission with satisfaction, as among the pleasures of the country, I never rank going in a crowd to enjoy them. However, you and I have had the rare privilege of amusing ourselves, and knowing
ing

ing when we were amused ; and the rationality of such a privilege is so evident, that I hope it may be enjoyed by an increased number of guests. To do my uncle justice, he is not one of those who invite a party into the country in order to make it as much like town as possible ; who amuse their guests with walking out in the heat of the day, regale them with dinner in the cool of the evening, keep them at cards till midnight, and then remark what a pleasing variety is made in the country, by having their friends from town to partake its pleasures with them.

I shall call on Madame de St. Edmund to-morrow, to inquire when it will be agreeable to her to leave Paris for a few days, and to ask her of whom she would wish the party to consist, as my first anxiety will be to
render

render it pleasant to her, for whom indeed it will be principally formed.

As for you, Sir, I am angry with you. I find that you are guilty of flattery. You cannot plead innocence of the charge : your conscience had before accused you of it ; and the only real compliment you ever pay me, is when you fear that it will not have escaped my observation. This is indeed a great fault, and as I have too sincere a friendship for you not to be anxious to promote your amendment, I shall punish you by condemning you to coming this evening to give me a lesson on chess.

I shall offer you no gayer amusement ; and to bear with my stupidity in learning, will be a penance sufficiently severe to make you very careful not to merit it again by a repetition.

tition of the fault which gave rise to it.

I beg you will not, from a principle of revenge, exert your whole skill against me, as I may be unable to bear my defeat with good humour, and I do not feel sufficiently intimate with you to permit you to know the failings of,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

SERAPHINA DE MONTAUBAN.

LETTER XII.



Clementina de St. Far to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.-

I FEAR, my dear aunt, that you will again have called me idle, but indeed I must disown the charge. It is surely an error to call the dissipated idle. Do not they toil from morning till night in search of pleasure? and when one tedious day has ended in weariness and disappointment, do they not continue the pursuit on the next, without

without suffering the least discouragement by their constant want of success? It must be acknowledged, then, that in patience and perseverance they are not deficient, though the cause in which these virtues are exerted may not be altogether worthy of them.

You will easily imagine that I have some selfish reason for my anxiety in endeavouring to exculpate the triflers of the day from the charge of idleness. I confess, then, that it is because of late I have classed myself among them. My sister, Monsieur de St. Edmund, and I, have spent the last week in the country, at the magnificent chateau of Monsieur de la Ville, an uncle by marriage of Madame de Montauban. Of course she was of the party, and the principal person in it; for Monsieur de la
Ville

Ville being an old man, and rendered infirm by the gout, deputed his niece to perform the honours of his house. I must in justice to her declare, that she executed that office extremely well, and was very polite and attentive, so long as all the gentlemen paid court, and the ladies gave up to her. She is one of those cautious characters who carefully avoid promoting any amusement wherein they are not themselves the primary objects of attention. For this reason she discourages music ; for she has neither voice nor ear. If, in the morning, my sister and I were entreated to form a little concert with some of the company, Madame de Montauban had always the head-ache ; and then Mons. de St. Edmund, who otherwise would have been unfashionable enough to listen with the greatest pleasure to his wife's performances,

was.

was invited to accompany her in a promenade, because nothing contributed so much towards relieving her malady, as exercise and fresh air; while nothing tended so much to increase it as the noise of instruments and voices among which her own vocal powers could not be distinguished.

In the evenings, however, she recovered her spirits at the card-table, which is her proper sphere; and there, indeed, the trifling vivacity of her conversation passes for wit, and has the double advantage of gaining the admiration, and diverting the attention of the company: thus, at the same time, her vanity is gratified and her purse enriched, for she never loses sight of her interests; and whilst between every repartee she pauses for a moment, apparently only to recover
breath,

breath, she is, in reality, calculating the chances for or against her with the greatest mathematical precision. If, however, she be accidentally discovered receiving what is not due, or neglecting to pay what is, the trifling mistake is of course imputed to inattention, and none can be so shocking as, by claiming pecuniary rights, to interrupt a conversation which appears so brilliant and interesting ;—I say appears, for I have already discovered that there is in wit, as in jewels, a mock species, which sparkles tolerably in a crowded room, and by the light of innumerable tapers, when the same would appear, on a closer scrutiny, particularly in a retired situation, a poor counterfeit of no value.

You see, my dear aunt, that I do not yet love Madame de Montauban,
and.

and she has not increased my regard by her neglect to include my father in our party. I sensibly feel any rudeness shewn to him, and am certain that this mark of it originated solely with her, as she had the intire nomination of the guests. For my own part I was not in the least flattered by being of the number, as, on account of my present residence in my sister's house, it was impossible to avoid inviting me, and this, indeed, only rendered the omission of my father still more pointed.

I had resolved to decline her invitation with all the coolness which I really feel towards her; but sometimes, to resent an insult is to gratify the petty malice which produced it, and as I was far from wishing to add in the least to her triumph, I reluctantly accompanied my sister, for whose
sake

sake, however, I was anxious to conceal my vexation. I am, indeed, exceedingly desirous that nothing should transpire which might lead Eugenia to suspect the treachery of her new friend; for if the knowledge of her ills will not enable her to avert them, it is surely wise to suffer her to remain in ignorance of them.

Such is Eugenia's sensibility, that the discovery of Madame de Montauban's perfidy, and her husband's weakness, would infallibly cloud her lovely countenance with sorrow : at the same time that her natural sweetness of disposition would prompt her to treat Mons. de St. Edmund with additional kindness, in order to recal him to his allegiance; and indeed I believe that his fondness for her would urge him never to stray from it, if the mild dictates of affection were not overpowered
by

by the intrigues of flattery and vanity.

The slightest increase of attention from Eugénia would not be unobserved by him, as he must be conscious of not deserving it, and this would be a cause of uneasiness to him, at least in her presence; for how painful must it be to receive obligations from those whom we are injuring! He would fly from her to Madame de Montauban, in whose company he certainly would not be awed by any great severity of virtue, and might imagine that he liked her society, when, in fact, it would only afford him ease from its mediocrity.

You find, my dear aunt, that like a good chess player I can see many moves before me; you may, perhaps, think that I see them through the
distorting

distorting medium of prejudice; but believe me, I am not too severe; I could not love Eugenia, if I liked Madame de Montauban.

Our party was increased during the last three days of our visit, by the arrival of the Marquis de Mertueil and Mr. Seymour. Had the former been desirous of appearing to disadvantage, he could not have taken a more certain method to succeed than by associating himself with the latter. Since my introduction into society, I have frequently been surprised at the excessive vanity, or the extreme humility displayed in the choice of companions. We sometimes see a beautiful woman selected for the friend of one who is, perhaps, scarcely removed from deformity; or a sensible man attended by one who may be only just able to applaud the re-
marks

marks which he cannot comprehend : yet the plain female does not appear to think her claims on admiration inferior to those of the beauty to whom she acts as a foil ; or does the stupid ignoramus seem to think his *galimatias* as deserving of the attention of the company as the most judicious observations of his sensible friend, and utters them accordingly with a much greater air of importance.

A pleasing young lady of our party said to me one day, “ Ah ! Mademoiselle, how beautiful and accomplished is Madame de St. Edmund, and how amiable too ! But shall I confess to you that I cannot forbear wishing that either she were less charming, or I more so ; for the pleasure which I should feel in her society is lessened by the consciousness that where she is, none other can be admired ; a

VOL. I. F consideration,”

consideration," added she smiling, "not very likely to increase the attachment of one female to another." Some may deem these sentiments selfish, but surely a candid avowal of them is indicative of an ingenuous disposition.

I did not wish to treat the Marquis de Mertueil with particular coldness, as I consider pointed conduct of any kind flattering to the object of it, insomuch as it convinces the person to whom it is directed that he is sufficiently important to occupy, in some measure, the thoughts of those who adopt it. I therefore behaved to him as to every other gentleman, carefully avoiding a particular politeness to any one, lest he should suspect me of the despicable artifice of seeking to rouse his jealousy though he had forfeited my esteem.

The

The Marquis, however, is too rich in the possession of his own good opinion to be easily persuaded that he does not stand very high in that of others.

One day I had the misfortune to find myself nearly alone with him, being in a part of the room at some distance from the rest of the company. Embracing the advantage which this accident offered, he had the effrontery to thank me for my goodness in restoring him to my favour ; adding, that from the moment when he feared he had inadvertently lost it, he had been the most miserable of men. I replied with the utmost composure, " I could have wished, Sir, not to have been reminded of circumstances which, from their unimportance, have been long since forgotten by me ; by recalling them to my me-

F 2

mory

mory, you oblige me to take the trouble of shewing a marked contempt where I should have infinitely preferred following the dictates of indolence, in behaving only with the indifference naturally felt in the presence of an insignificant object." I then left him, and flatter myself that he did not feel perfectly at ease, as he certainly did not recover his usual smile of self-approbation for some time afterwards.

I fear, my dear aunt, that you will think me very ill-natured to derive pleasure from the mortification of others. But the respect due to myself required that I should treat the Marquis with this undisguised contempt ; particularly as it was the second time he had deserved it by his incorrigible vanity.

I felt

I felt comparatively happy in our return to Paris, and thought the road much pleasanter from the chateau than it had appeared in our approach to it. Mr. Seymour accompanied us home, taking the place which Mad. de Montauban had occupied in going to the chateau, and we found in him an infinitely more agreeable companion.—I cannot like her—vanity may be her only fault, but that vanity is surely carried to an unpardonable height when it prompts her to court the attention of the husband of her to whom she pretends to be so much attached. The friendship which meditates such an injury cannot be sincere, and I am afraid that conjugal harmony has but too often owed its interruption to a friend like Madame de Montauban.

And after all, the conquest of a married man, whatever importance
Madame

Madame de Montauban may affix to it, in my opinion is not to be considered such a striking proof of the infallibility of her charms, as she seems inclined to believe.

If a woman will make the first advances, they will certainly be received by a married man with gratitude proportionate to the distrust which he had in his claim to them ; whilst the young men of the present day affect, on the contrary, to confer a favour on a lady by accepting her attentions.

Adieu, my dear aunt. You will think that all these splenetic observations are only a poor atonement for my late silence ; but my next letter shall be cheerful and good humoured, as you have often kindly called your own

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER XIII



M. de St. Edmund to Madame de Montauban.

Friday Morning.

WHY, madam, will you not always be charming as you were last night? It is when we are alone that you rivet those chains of which I never feel the weight but when we are in a croud, for then you withhold from me smiles which would make the most galling servitude a state of happiness. Whence this unkind difference of conduct?

Is

Is it to make me yet more sensible of the tedious restraints of society ? Ah ! believe me, you could not have pursued more effectual means to make me hate it.

I contrast a cold and formal circle, insipid in proportion as it is enlarged, with the delightful tête à têtes which I have had the felicity to enjoy with one whose conversation and manners are calculated at once to improve the mind and interest the heart. I laugh mechanically at the forced jests of some whom fashion has constituted wits in defiance of nature's previous decree that they should be fools ; but I compare their feeble efforts at repartee with the brilliant sallies continually issuing, almost unconsciously, from lips which justly proud of their office seem to blush deeper sweets in the performance of it.

I could

I could better bear with tiresome ceremonies and hacknied forms had I your sympathy to sustain my patience in a trial too severe for mere philosophy ; but I look towards you as it were by instinct, when my exhausted spirits need support ; a glance from you would be a cordial to them, but I have the additional mortification of seeing only averted looks, or the cold expression of indifference, whilst you bestow on every other person attentions of which I will not say that any one is less worthy than I should be, for your favours are too justly appreciated ever to be received with ingratitude ; but surely I may without presumption affirm that you could confer them on none who would be more sensible of their value.

You do me the justice to profess.
yourself

yourself convinced of this, and you say that it is in consequence of it you have bestowed on me the title of your friend, which I gratefully acknowledge is inestimable. Is it, then, that this honour has roused in me the ambition to hope for some yet more enviable ; or is it that there may be rivals in friendship as well as in love, and that jealousy is, perhaps, a natural attendant on excess in either?

You assure me that you do not feel really interested in the society wherein you deport yourself so amiably towards all but me: yet if you be not charmed, is it a natural consequence that you are not to charm? and those whom you captivate, are they the less happy in your smiles as being more the offspring of politeness than of sentiment? Do not despise

spise me for the apparent narrowness of my ideas ! Perhaps I am too presumptuous when I declare myself willing to disclaim that of a friend, for then I must assume that of a lover. La Bruyere will not allow of Platonic love, yet grants that there may be between the sexes a sentiment of a nature differing from both love and friendship, and, as he says, perhaps more pleasing than either. I agree with him that this state is possible, but that it is pleasant I cannot so readily allow. Perhaps my sensations hitherto have been but vaguely understood even by myself, yet can the object which has inspired be ignorant of them ? Ah, no ! surely to her they are known, perhaps they are even answered ! Whither is my presumption leading me ? Yet if passion did not plunge me into delirium, you

last night appeared to my enamoured eyes not wholly insensible to the effusions of a heart devoted to you. I even thought that the native candour of your mind was about to triumph over the cautious disguise too early implanted by mistaken prudence in your sex at the expence of every tender sensibility and pure emotion of the soul ! You sighed too ! Ah ! I have not forgotten that love is born in a sigh, and, indeed, it seemed to me that the precious words, " I love you," hung on your lips as if unwilling to leave so delightful an abode, or perhaps restrained by some unjust fear which could only arise from ignorance of the power of your own charms. Ah ! why this distrust with one whom you must know too well to suspect of abusing the soft confession which his hopes prompt him to

to think you might be induced to make were you assured that it would not be bestowed on one unworthy of it? Ah! if there needed any addition to the claims which your charms already have on my admiration, surely by adding gratitude to the number they would be fixed beyond the power of change, the influence of which I cannot even now suppose; for whatever may become of the future, the past is irrevocable, and whilst my memory can recall it I never can have a more delightful subject of contemplation. Let me intreat your permission to see you this evening. I live but in your presence, and the languor of the hours when I cannot have that happiness, is cheered but by counting the moments which bring me nearer to it.

Adieu,

Adieu, madam, until I can in person
assure you how much I am honoured
by considering myself as

the most obedient

of your servants

PIERRE DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XIV,



Madame de Montauban to Monsieur de St. Edmund.

Saturday Afternoon.

YOUR billet of yesterday found me in a wretched humour, which was not lessened by the unjust reproaches it contained. I should be too fortunate in your friendship were you intirely free from the arbitrary inclinations of your sex ; I am convinced, however, how highly I value it, by the consolation which I felt on reflecting

flecting that you did not witness the vexation to which your avowal of them gave rise. I have almost resolved never to converse or correspond with you again.

In our conversations you make me say a thousand things which I can never mean, and which, in your absence, it seems to me impossible that I should have uttered.—My letters are filled with explanations of my meaning, and your's with perverting it—where is this to end? We never persuade each other by our arguments, and yet we are never weary of maintaining them. Let me, however, seek to convince you that your complaints are at least selfish, if not absolutely unjust.

You accuse me of being less amiable towards you in public than in private:

private : this charge, however, acquits me of vanity, for it proves that your attentions are not made subservient to it. But granting this, for I wish to give an example of candour to you who will never grant any thing, yet why is it so ? Because I know the malevolence of society, and how much it delights in misrepresenting actions the most innocent.—Your friendship for me, if manifested in public, would be magnified into an attachment the more blamable as it would be the more unexpected, from the known excess of your passion for your wife, of which she is every way deserving. I therefore should be accused, however unjustly, of diverting you from that constancy which you have, since your marriage, so laudably practised to the admiration of all your former acquaintance.

Far

Far be it from me to occasion the least diminution of that admiration, and still further to risk making Madame de St. Edmund uneasy by depriving her of the smallest part of the attention to which you have so much accustomed her, that if excess have not given birth to indifference, she would not feel assured of your regard without it. I torment myself with fancying that of late her friendship for me has declined, but she cannot be so unjust as to be jealous of your esteem. Alas ! it is too valuable to me to be easily relinquished ; and yet I should regret the continuance of it did it wound her sensibility, though I might be tempted to think such an effect rather the offspring of caprice ! Ah ! believe me, I do not wish to make you hate society, I know too well the pain occasioned by a sense of its injustice. But I am, perhaps,
guilty

guilty of the fault for which I am condemning it. I affect to blame its restraints when, in fact, I have those which are the most insurmountable within my own breast : a conviction of the importance of that passion which your sex can treat occasionally with convenient levity will, I hope, ever preserve me from its effects.

The words which you fancied my lips so ready to express, I should guard, even had I the inclination to utter them, with the most rigid caution ; for I should consider them as synonymous with declaring myself a slave for life.

Love is a talisman which raises the possessors of it in their own estimation, and, happy themselves, they seek

seek to render all around them so likewise.

Perhaps a woman alone can appreciate all the value of this delightful passion, for to the female heart is it given to feel its fullest influence. La Bruyere does us justice when he says that women are more capable of exalted attachments than men are. Your sex makes love the pleasure and relaxation of life; to ours it constitutes the object and business of it. A woman's world is love! born with the wish to please, she finds happiness in proportion to her success, and moves in a magic circle of which her lover is the centre; to him she is unceasingly attracted, and for him she displays all her powers to charm. This state of existence, I frankly own, appears very enviable to me, but I
am

am not so visionary as to imagine that it can be realized in society.— You are angry because I am more rational in retirement than in a croud; know you not, my friend, that

“ Le grand monde est léger, inappliqué, volage ;

“ Sa voix trouble et séduit. Est-on seul on est sage.”

To be received well in the world it is necessary to be foolish as it is to appear amused with spectacles however wearisome, and flattered with compliments however dull. One great privilege, however, for which we ought not to be ungrateful is, that whilst, in company, the eyes, lips, and ears must act according to established rule, the imagination is permitted to remain free, and I am often indebted to its powers for enabling me to wear the garb of patient attention
whilst

whilst I am really mentally enjoying a scene and society the very opposite to that in which I find myself.—Ah ! it is a flattering deceitful power, but its illusions are the solaces by which the dull realities of life are sustained.

Adieu : write to me no more, neither seek to see me again, for your conversation, epistolary or personal, unfits me for that of the less refined; and as they form infinitely the greater part of society, whilst we are condemned to remain in it, certainly it is not wisdom to suffer ourselves to be disgusted with them.

Adieu, then. I shall be solitary this evening, but not alone, for you know Montaigne says that a man is most absent from his friend when in his company,

company, for that his presence releasing attention, gives the thoughts liberty to wander on every occasion. Certainly the calm and indolent assurance of content immediately inspired by the presence of a friend is as charming as the restless anxiety to which his absence gives rise is tormenting.

Adieu.

SERAPHINA DE MONTAUBAN.

LETTER XV.



Monsieur de St. Edmund to Madame de Montauban.

Tuesday Afternoon.

I HAVE presented myself at your door in vain, madam: it remains closed against me, and by your order too! Have I deserved this from you? I did not imagine that you could carry your absurd ideas of deference to the world to such a cruel height. But your attendants inform me that you are about to leave Paris.

Am

Am I only to be informed from them of this design to make me miserable? Surely the seclusion in which you have of late so obstinately persisted, has changed even your nature, and you have forgotten in solitude the claims which some, who are unfortunately left in society, ought to have on your compassion.

My dear madam, reflect on the barbarous mode of conduct which you have unjustly adopted towards me; remember that I unfortunately retain my feelings, if you have acquired the enviable privilege of suspending yours. I scarcely believe my ears, when your order of denial sounds in them; and sometimes I think that it must be owing to a change in my person, that I am not recognized by your domestics; which is far from improbable, for the mind and body

are too nearly allied for my countenance not to have suffered by the vexations which you have occasioned me. You owe me much, madam, in return for them; but I must insist that the first acknowledgment of your debt shall be an order for my admittance into your presence, and I can then more readily enter into an explanation of all that I shall still think due to me. Like a cautious creditor, I shall watch all your steps; and I should indeed deserve to forfeit my claims, could I suffer you to depart hence without accompanying you, in order to ensure your return.

I have ordered my servant to deliver this billet on his way into the suburbs; and as I shall leave the house immediately on his departure,
in

in a very few moments after the perusal of it you must expect to see,

Madam,

Most devotedly yours,

PIERRE DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XVI.



Clementina de St. Far to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

MY fears are realized, my dear aunt. Madame de Montauban has persuaded Monsieur de St. Edmund to leave Paris, and to make her the companion of his flight.

I believe they are gone into Dauphiné, to Monsieur de St. Edmund's estates : at least he has desired that
his

his letters may be addressed to him there. The ostensible motives for his departure are to superintend some alterations and improvements on his lands, which, he told my sister, made his presence indispensably necessary; but he did not say that Madame de Montauban's was equally so. The pleasure of communicating this additional intelligence was reserved for a little chattering Madame Limont; one of the many who think themselves privileged to be impertinent under the pretence of friendship; who run to inform their acquaintance of a misfortune, in order to give advice how they should conduct themselves under it, and who enjoin secrecy to others, merely that they may reserve to themselves the pleasure of communication.

I think my sister had anticipated,
and

and was therefore, in some measure, prepared for the event, though she had never given the least hint of her suspicions to any one. I certainly might have expected this cruel stroke; yet it has affected me as severely as if it had been utterly unlooked for.

For some moments anger triumphed over my grief, and I could not deny myself the satisfaction of gratifying it, by giving utterance to the bitter expressions which it naturally suggested. • You would, indeed, have thought, had you seen me, that I was the injured wife, and my sister only a sympathizing friend.

She used every possible argument to calm and console me. “Consider, my dear Clementina,” said she, “that Monsieur de St. Edmund has always

always been gay, though I believe that Madame de Montauban has seduced him by her artifices, and I have been more deceived by her than him. I could scarcely have expected that he would have remained constant so long as he has done; and at last he left me with politeness: he will soon see his error, and return to me with renewed affection." Thus she endeavoured to reason with me, as I doubt not she had before reasoned with herself. She was anxious that my father should remain in ignorance of the unfortunate event: she wished to spare him the slightest sensation of self-reproach, which might arise from his having united her to a man whose age and principles were so different from her own.

When we saw him, however, his agitation proclaimed his knowledge

of what we so anxiously wished to hide from him. "Do not weep, my child," said he, without observing that my sister was much more composed than he was, "do not weep, all will yet be well: no man can long forsake my Eugenia. Ah, why have I lived to see my child made wretched; and that too through the means of her mistaken father!" He paused—his eyes were full of tears. Eugenia took the advantage of his silence to beg, in the sweetest tones of consolation, that he would not distress himself; but the sight of her father's grief overcame her resolution, which gradually forsook her, and, after a vain effort to resume it, she threw herself into his arms, and mingled her tears with his.

At length my poor father exclaimed, "I had hoped that you were
happ

happy together ; you always appeared to be so ; and I watched you attentively, pleased with the flattering hope that your happiness was real." "We were happy, my dear sir," replied Eugenia, as she melted into tears of tenderness, for of whatever we are deprived, we remember only its value ; "we were happy indeed, and I trust we shall be so again." My father shook his head ; and, overpowered by his feelings, resigned himself to a gloomy silence, which neither Eugenia nor I could summon resolution to interrupt.

The entrance of a servant with a message at length relieved us from this situation ; and after he left the room, the conversation imperceptibly turned upon the line of conduct which it would be necessary to adopt in so delicate a situation ; and as a
G 5 subject

subject by examination is disarmed of many of the terrors which silent meditation attaches to it, we began by degrees to be more composed.

Fortunately we had not any engagement for the evening; and my father, after some further conversation, left us in a state of mind more tranquil than that in which he had found us. We have resolved to see our friends as usual, at least until my sister hears from Monsieur de St. Edmund, as when she knows his plans, she can with more propriety arrange her own.

I dare say she is at this moment employed as I am, in writing to you, my dear aunt, who so kindly participate in our pleasures and in our pains. Whatever trials Heaven may think proper to send us, we shall certainly
always

always find consolation in the affection of relatives so kind as you and my uncle have ever been to us. Believe me, my dear aunt, we are truly sensible of your goodness, and feel how much you are entitled to the warmest gratitude of my Eugenia and your ever affectionate

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER XVII.



Monsieur de St. Edmund to the Count de Mirepoix.

Grenoble.

How many years have now passed, my dear Count, since the beginning of our mutual regard! I am unwilling to compute the exact number; for, though our friendship be a subject which I must ever contemplate with pleasure, yet to reflect on the length of time which has elapsed since its commencement, is productive

tive of considerations not altogether so agreeable.

I cannot remember that period without at the same time recollecting that we are no longer in the pride of youth. Our gallant St. Evremond says, that the last sighs of a fine woman are more for the loss of beauty than of life; and I believe that in a man who has been fortunate in his amours, there exists a correspondent passion; for to him old age has certainly no mortification greater than that of being deprived of all hopes of further conquest.

To the man who has been accustomed to the cheering influence of female smiles, the winter of old age is as dreadful as is the absence of the sun to the butterfly, which, whilst warmed in the golden beams of day,
displays

displays its brightest colours, and flutters from flower to flower in sportive gaiety; but no sooner does night spread her sable mantle over its slender form, than it droops, folds its wings, and sinks into a state of torpitude.

You will probably conclude from these reflections that I have enrolled myself in the list of penitents, and that I am about to retire into Italy, to expiate, by abstinence and solitude, the follies of my youth. On the contrary, I am on the point of renewing them; and perhaps have a little pride in shewing the gay world, that at five-and-forty I have not ceased to please.

It would be in vain to deny that a lively and interesting widow is at present the companion of my wanderings.

derings. All the world knows it ; and from my wife only am I anxious that it should be concealed.

The wreath of conquest was never more valuable in my eyes by being gemmed with the tears of forsaken beauty ; and I owe too much to my Eugenia willingly to draw one sigh from that bosom, which is the fair abode of every virtue.

During four years she formed the pleasing anxiety of my life : I married her ; and since then she has been the pride and solace of it. Were my election to be renewed, she would again be the chosen of my heart, which is at this moment as sensible of her worth as when it first acknowledged her charms. Yes ; her influence over my affection remains unchanged, but the senses are rebellious ;

bellious; they are not always fastidious, and will sometimes be amused with objects, whose only power to please arises from novelty.

In marriage, the most perfect esteem and unbounded confidence, the tenderest affection, and the most soothing and delightful tranquillity, may be enjoyed. But, in this state, the fluctuations of hope and fear, the agreeable torments of suspense, the pleasures of expectation, and the sensibility of passion, must be no longer expected. A good man would willingly resign them from a principle of duty; a wise man, from a conviction of their futility.

Alas! I fear that I am neither the one nor the other. I rank among the numerous characters who have just virtue enough to make them sensible

sible of the deformity of vice; just strength enough to lament the weakness which cannot withstand the allurements of folly; and possess just enough of the world's good opinion to know its value, and wish that it could be more worthily bestowed.

You, De Mirepoix, are a married man; and, though every married man might not, yet you will believe me, when I swear to you, that I love my wife, and that if she were not my wife, she should be my mistress.

I know that I should be laughed at if I were suspected of a folly like this. Every one knows how much I esteem her, and how much I am gratified in seeing her splendid and caressed. Yet many men are all this merely because the admiration paid to
their

their wives by the world, administers to their own vanity, and soothes their self-love.

This is not my case. I revere my wife's virtues; I respect her talents; I adore her graces; and admire her person. In short, I love her, though without passion I acknowledge; for that can no more exist in marriage, than the fervor of devotion can be kept alive in the uniformity of a cloister.

Familiarity with any object is destructive of its effect. Habit deprives the voluptuary of the keen relish of pleasure; and the voluntary sufferings of the penitent lessen the acute sense of pain. It reconciles the devotee to her sackcloth and ashes, and teaches the possessor of beauty the language of moderation.

tion. But the love which I feel for my Eugenia can never be inspired by another; and my opinion of a virtuous woman is so exalted, that I believe she would prefer esteem without passion, to passion without esteem.

With this full conviction of her worth, I must acknowledge that I am at present unjust to Madame de St. Edmund; yet I am perhaps still more unjust to Madame de Montauban. I desert the former, but the latter I deceive. If I estrange myself for a time from the former, it is only for a time that I attach myself to the latter. I believe that Madame de Montauban entertained a sincere passion for me, and I am ungenerous enough to make it subservient only to my own amusement.

To

To Eugenia I can atone for my temporary infidelity by increased tenderness; and her pure and virtuous heart will cherish no resentment towards a returning and repentant husband. Already I anticipate not only the delicate attentions by which she will endeavour to convince me of her entire forgiveness, but the amiable artifices by which she will seek to reconcile me to myself.

Yes, my heart is already occupied with the delightful idea of returning to her. But how can I acquit myself towards Madame de Montauban? She will be left a prey to listlessness and regret, whilst she mourns the unfortunate partiality which she had long endeavoured to conceal from the object of it.

She is not an artful woman, De Mirepoix ;

poix ; I know the sex, and am too old to be duped, though not old enough to treat a female harshly. I cannot repulse tenderness with disdain, or presume on it and be ungrateful.

All this trouble I have taken to prove, that if my conduct towards my wife be improper, that towards the woman for whom I have deserted her is still more so. I have, indeed, from the beginning of my letter, wandered from what I had meant to be its sole subject ; and this was, to beg that the friendship with which you have so long honoured me, should now be extended to Madame de St. Edmund, her father, and sister.

Eugenia possesses that innate dignity which alone would support her against the world ; but I do not wish
her

her to depend only on that. The countenance of the rich and powerful is the securest shield against malice and ill-nature, and none would presume to think her unprotected, even in the absence of her husband, whilst honoured with the friendship of the Countess de Mirepoix.

To know Monsieur de St. Far, her father, is to respect him; and the sentiment of pity, which the knowledge of his misfortunes might inspire, yields to admiration of the fortitude with which they are borne. Party-rage has not been able to deprive him of his children, and in them he possesses treasures beyond what wealth or fame could give.

For several years he enjoyed a pension, which, however, with many others, was lately struck off, through
the

the intrigues of those, who, envious of the good things wherein they do not partake, endeavour, under the specious pretence of reform, to reduce all to their own level. I fortunately obtained intelligence of this diminution in the income of Monsieur de St. Far, who was then in the country, and by a little address I have since contrived to keep him in ignorance of the circumstance, by making him remittances to the same amount as usual, through the channel by which he had been accustomed to receive them. This addition to his own property, enables him to support the appearance which his rank demands, and to possess the comforts which his advanced age requires; whilst he, under the idea that what he received is in right of his pension, enjoys it without feeling any of the painful sensations which are excited

cited by a consciousness of obligation. I should be sorry were my absence to undeceive him : by your assistance I hope to prevent the possibility of it; and if you will have the goodness to officiate for me till my return, I will beg you to take the trouble of dedicating a few leisure moments to calling on my banker, who will instruct you in what manner to proceed. I will not say how much you will oblige me by doing me this service, as I know that few inducements are required by you to perform an act of benevolence.

Clementina I regard as my sister, and am proud of having one so lovely as she is. Had you been young, De Mirepoix, and unmarried, I might have hoped, through her means, to have united the bonds of
consanguinity

consanguinity with those of friendship; as it is, your regard for me must induce you to watch over her until my return, when I hope to bestow her as she deserves, and at the same time make a worthy man happy. I shall give her a portion, which, though too small to tempt avarice, will yet be large enough to free her from the sense of entire dependance on her husband. I design her, as you may have already conceived, for the engaging young Englishman whom you have so frequently seen with us. I trust that their minds are congenial; and, as her father has given his consent, I have no doubt of obtaining hers.

Seymour exists but in her presence, and it is in his country that domestic happiness flourishes in the greatest perfection. For this reason I should

scarcely wish to tempt him from his native isle to reside in our land of anarchy and confusion. The love of their country is a theme which has been familiar to all men in every age. The English prove that their *amor patriæ* exists not in idea only ; for the time of their residence abroad is seldom extended beyond what necessity requires. They traverse every land in search of riches, but only with the pleasing prospect of spending them in their own. Happy they who can be proud of their country, and whose love of it can form so considerable and praise-worthy a source of pleasure ! We are not so fortunate ; for, to possess a love of ours at present, would be to patronize vice and exult in folly. May the period soon arrive, my dear friend, when we may be patriots on rational grounds, and be enabled to
love

love our country above all others for being the most worthy of our love !

I own, that on this subject my wishes are warmer than my hopes. At all events, I fear that before the former are accomplished, I shall have time to run over great part of Italy ; and indeed, had I the whole world to traverse, I should not expect the completion of them in my absence. But however variable the disposition of the times may be, I trust that you will always find me unchanged,

And most devotedly your's,

PIERRE DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XVIII.

The Count de Mirepoix to M. de St. Edmund.

Paris.

I HAVE not yet, my friend, ceased to smile at your curious epistle. It is the production of a mind ill at ease; it is the work of a man, who is labouring to convince others of what he cannot easily convince himself.

To

To imagine that, in your present situation, you can want amusement, would be an insult to you and your fair fellow-traveller; it would be to doubt the powers of gallantry in one, and the powers of pleasing in the other.

However, as I am not so fortunately occupied as you may be, permit me to amuse myself by making a few remarks on the whimsical production with which you have favoured me, and which I value even for the eccentricities which characterize it.

I sincerely condole with you on the subject which you so feelingly deplore; nor do my condolences entirely arise from the selfishness of sympathy; for I cannot forget that I
have

have one great source of consolation which you do not seem to remember—it is, that I am your junior by six years. I do not, however, pretend that, even with this advantage, I am in the bloom of life any more than you are, but neither can I reproach myself for neglecting its sweets when I possessed them.

I have ever regarded youth as the season of hope, of expectation, and delight; and the remembrance of its pleasures now sheds a mild influence over the more chastened enjoyments of middle life.

Your simile of the butterfly is in itself pretty, exclusive of the meritorious modesty which you evince in thus comparing yourself to an insect proverbially trifling. However, you
certainly

certainly are right in endeavouring to avert its fate as long as you possibly can.

That the fair object of your present devoirs is lively, all the world knows; and that she is interesting, I am glad you find. Your attentions ought to be rewarded, for I believe that they were originally perfectly disinterested, and more a tribute to your reputation for gallantry, than the genuine effusions of the heart.

Reputation, my friend, of any kind, like every earthly good, has its attendant evils, and the trouble of preserving it is almost equivalent to the pleasure of possessing it. We do not like to part in age—(observe, if this word AGE startle you, it is your own expression)—with any thing

thing to which we have been accustomed from youth. You have had all your life the character of a man of gallantry, and you are willing to support it now, at the expence of leaving a woman whom you fondly and justly love, to follow one whom I will not say you much despise, for that word is perhaps too harsh to be used at any time in speaking of a female, but whom you cannot fail to condemn.

You say that you had a pride in shewing the gay world, that at five-and-forty you had not ceased to please. Ah! my friend, we too often sacrifice real happiness, that we may assume the semblance of it. We are more anxious to appear happy than to be so, more desirous to excite envy in the bosoms of others, by an
outward

outward shew of felicity, than to possess the consciousness of it in our own.

We all court happiness, but we wish not to enjoy her in the shade; we are anxious with her, as with a beautiful mistress, to proclaim her charms to the world, in order to gratify our self-love, by the admiration which they create; and the consequence is, with her as with mistresses of more mortal mould, that our vanity is too often punished by the desertion of the object which we had so imprudently exposed.

I confess I had rather, for the credit of men of pleasure, that you had shewn the world that one of them could place his felicity in domestic happiness, particularly in happiness so perfect as yours might have been.

I wish you had shewn, that if (to use your own simile) you once roved from flower to flower, attracted one moment by the brilliant colours of the tulip, at the next by the humble sweetness of the violet, then by the modesty of the spotless lily, or the perfumes of the blushing rose, yet, when fortunate enough to find one flower, combining in itself the beauty and fragrance of every other, that then, blest in its sweets, you could be content to rove no further, but gratefully to observe among them that constancy which, though in such circumstances it can no longer be deemed a virtue, can yet never cease to be a pleasure.

Trust me, you were much more the object of envy as Madame de St. Edmund's husband, than you will ever be as Madame de Montauban's gallant.

gallant. Absence, the touch-stone of real worth, will convince you of that of the former, as you will every day be made more sensible how much she gains in comparing her with the latter.

You seek to excuse your weakness by pleading your habitual complaisance to the sex: is it not rather, my friend, the craving of habitual vanity? of a forced appetite, spoiled by the high seasoning of flattery?—But you say, that though too old to be duped, you are not old enough to treat a female harshly, or repulse tenderness with disdain. I never yet, St. Edmund, knew a man boast of his knowledge of the world, until he apprehended that he had been mistaken in his opinion of it. When we find ourselves deceived, it is natural for us to seek to deceive others. I mean

mean not, however, to add my censure to your own, which I perceive you have incurred, notwithstanding the ingenious arguments by which you endeavour to silence it.

Let me persuade you, however, not to add to your perplexities by unnecessary anxiety for the future happiness of your fair friend. Believe me, it will not easily be wrecked. Her attachment does not appear to have been of that genuine and delicate nature, which would make it droop under the self-inflicted tortures of concealment: on the contrary, I suspect that her's is a flame on which the cold gales of indifference will have no other effect, than that of directing its course towards some other object.

Rochefoucault, whose truths offend
all

all those who cannot controvert them, says that "a woman mourns her first lover long, if she do not obtain a second." The female heart is too tender to remain unoccupied ; Madame de Montauban's is probably not composed of materials unusually hard.

You cannot reproach yourself with having seduced her from the paths of virtue, and I dare say that you will not be afflicted by witnessing in her, after your desertion, any severe excess of painful and penitent seclusion.

Your absence is, on one account, pleasing to me ; though I certainly must condemn its cause, it will enable me to shew you how happy I shall be in fulfilling every request which you may honour me by making ; but
indeed

indeed, in this ready compliance, I shall have no merit, your wishes and my own, in this instance, so exactly accord, that whilst you are obliged by the services which I can render to your family, I am infinitely too well rewarded by the satisfaction I feel in rendering them to those so amiable and deserving.

Believe me, my dear St. Edmund, you cannot give me a higher proof of your esteem, than by commanding to the utmost

Your's most sincerely,

EUSTACE DE MIREPOIX.

LETTER XIX.



Clementina de St. Far to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

PLEASURE and pain, my dear aunt, we are told are so intimately connected, that wherever one is, the other soon follows.

My last letter was unavoidably occupied with unpleasant occurrences; but a most delightful incident shall be the subject of this. I always communicate

municate every thing disagreeable whilst the impressions of vexation are strong in my mind, I am therefore determined to act impartially, and write the account of our evening's and, indeed, morning's amusement; for it is now near six o'clock, whilst my sensations of pleasure are at their acmé.

Away, then, every intrusion of fatigue, or allurements of sleep; I wave my pen, and feel renovated by the theme on which I am about to enter.

When I last wrote to you, we had been engaged for some time to a ball, which was given this evening at the house of the Count de Mirepoix, a particular friend of Monsieur de St. Edmund.

My

My father was anxious that we should fulfil our engagement, and I was very ready to acquiesce; but my sister, who had not been in public since Monsieur de St. Edmund's departure, conjured up so many phantoms of mortifying pity, affected consolation, and ill-disguised triumph, that her spirits sunk as the hour drew near, and she almost persuaded herself that it would be more advisable to remain at home.

I own that my sentiments on this subject differed from her's. I knew that my father wished us to accompany him thither. I had likewise promised to dance with Mr. Seymour, and you know, my dear aunt, that as he is a stranger, and a foreigner, it would have been extremely unpolite to have disappointed him. I therefore combated her arguments with
all

all the eloquence of which I was mistress. I begged her to recall to mind the words of Helvetius on self-importance, and strengthened his remarks by the following quotation from the Rambler of Dr. Johnson, that great and good man, whose works you, my dear aunt, have taught us to understand and admire.

“Every man,” he says, “is of consequence to himself, and, therefore, he imagines to others; and supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and all his pains, is, perhaps, the first to publish injuries or misfortunes which had never been known unless related by himself.”

The words of Johnson are seldom urged in vain. Eugenia accordingly yielded to their force, and consented
to

to go to the ball, but on the condition that I should order her dress, and intirely relieve her from the trouble of decorating herself. I willingly agreed to this stipulation, and, in justice to my own taste, I must add that she never looked more beautiful.

Her fine auburn hair was braided and confined with strings of pearls ; her neck, arms, and wrists, were decorated with the same delicate ornaments ; her robe, though simple, was exactly calculated to display to the utmost advantage her lovely form, which was shaded by a long lace veil, the graceful folds of which added to the elegance of her appearance.

Eugenia smiled approbation as she
carelessly

carelessly surveyed the mirror that proudly reflected her bewitching figure, with which I was indeed so much delighted as to be almost indifferent to the adorning of my own. My head was simply decorated with roses, and the same charming flowers graced my bosom. Thus equipped, we alighted at the door of the Count de Mirepoix.

There is something so exhilarating in the lights and music of a ball-room, that the heart must be desolate indeed, in which they do not produce a momentary suspension of its sorrows in a scene where every countenance is illumined by gaiety and hope, and where the most luxuriant ideas of fancy are realised by the hand of opulence.

Even

Even Eugenia looked animated as we passed through the superb anti-chamber to a saloon which opened into the ball-room, and in which the choicest exotics wafted their perfumes through the air : the glare of innumerable lights rivalling the day in brilliancy, was softened by shades of painted gauze ; and the elegant wreaths of flowers which crowned the whole, appeared to consecrate the scene to mirth and festivity.

Yet all this grandeur had not that effect on our feelings which the scent of a charming lilac-tree produced. “ Ah ! ” exclaimed Eugenia, “ that delightful fragrance reminds me of the window in my aunt’s closet, against which her favourite lilac grows in such abundance ! ” And indeed, my dearest madam, the beautiful

tiful flower brought a croud of tender recollections into our minds as we each placed a sprig of it in our bosoms.

The Count de Mirepoix has immense possessions, and lives in a style of great magnificence. Generous without ostentation, the poor feel his bounty as well as the rich; and few, whatever may be their situation in life, enter his noble mansion without being charmed with the owner of it. His lady is a fine woman of a most amiable character and much dignity of manners. She is much respected, and I rejoice to see the progress of an intimacy between my sister and her, which will, I hope, be productive of equal pleasure to both parties.

All

All the company were, or appeared to be, happy. Nothing occurred to wound my sister's feelings, and I had the pleasure of seeing her become more cheerful as the evening advanced.

I had wisely taken the resolution to forget all our recent vexations and troubles, and was dancing with no little animation when my attention was suddenly diverted from the dance by the entrance of the most elegant young man I ever beheld.

You shall guess the name of this irresistible stranger, whose person I will describe to you ; and if you cannot recognise him from my description, I will inform you by whom he was introduced ; if that will not be sufficient to lead to a discovery, I
will

will have the pleasure of telling you his name myself.

He is tall, slender, and finely formed; uniting in his person the most interesting appearance with an air of inexpressible dignity; a clear brown complexion, beautiful forehead and eye-brows, brilliant dark eyes, which give animation to a thoughtful expressive countenance, fine teeth, hair like my Eugenia's, and dressed in the English fashion.

Now, my dear aunt, cannot you guess who he is? Or you, my clever uncle? Oh! how dull you are become amidst retirement and books! He entered with Mr. Seymour, who had been called from me a few minutes before. You do not guess even yet! Then I am indeed in despair; what

what, can you not discover in the finished portrait I have drawn, the resemblance of your own son? your dear Henry? Wise parents! admirable diviners!

Yes, madam, it was he indeed. You know we have never seen him since we were mere babies, and I assure you that I had not the most distant thought of beholding my cousin in this charming stranger; though certainly his entrance with Mr. Seymour, and the daily expectation we were in of his arrival might have led me to suspect it—but it never suggested itself to me until I saw him conducting my sister to the upper end of the room to begin the dance; and as the particulars of their introduction were rather interesting, I will give you them as they were related to me by Eugenia.

Mr. Seymour brought your son to her, and merely begged to introduce him as a candidate for the honour of her hand in the dance. She replied that she should be happy in the acquaintance of any friend of Mr. Seymour, but in that instance was under the necessity of declining it as she had resolved not to dance again that evening.

“If, madam,” said your interesting Henry, “you be half as compassionate as your countenance must lead me to suppose, you will, I am sure, revoke your resolution in favour of one who is not only a stranger to the company here, but almost in his native country, so long has he been absent from it.” My sister, pleased with his vivacity, appearance, and address, suffered herself to be prevailed upon, and had given him

her hand, when recollecting herself, “Mr. Seymour,” said she, “you have been so inattentive in the introduction of your friend, that I know not by what name to address him.” “I acknowledge my neglect, madam,” he replied, “but it was in fact designed ; I wished to see how far your compassion would extend towards one who has represented himself to be friendless and unknown. I trust you will not, however, repent of your condescension when I announce this stranger to you as Henry de Tourville.”

The surprize was too great for my sister, whose bloom forsook her cheeks. She looked earnestly at him and endeavoured to speak, but her voice faltered, and she burst into tears. Henry was shocked, and Sey-

mour reproached himself for having thoughtlessly exposed her sensibility to a trial which it was unable to support.

She, however, soon recovered herself, and when those who had pressed round her with anxious inquiries, were informed that her emotion had risen merely from the sudden and unexpected meeting with a relation, who had been long absent, they politely left her at liberty to converse with him.

Now was not all this, my dear aunt, very pretty ! Your poor Clementina had no such adventure ; she was introduced to him in the plain, old-fashioned style ; and when Henry and I had once declared that we were very happy to see each other, there
was

was an end of our mutual perturbations and anxieties: whilst he, therefore, was affectionately asking my sister, if she were too warm or too cold, fatigued or amused, and a number of questions equally important, I was obliged to content myself with poor Seymour, who humbly endeavoured to emulate his friend's attentions.

And now, my dear madam, I have concluded the account of our evening's adventure, and I hope in such a manner as to merit your approbation.

Never let my uncle again call me an idle girl; for I declare that I have written until I have scarcely strength to tell you that your son means to set off for Belle-vue as soon

as the business which brought him to Paris is concluded.

Adieu, my dear aunt. I certainly shall not waste much time in courting the drowsy god, for he has already taken possession of the senses of

Your

CLEMENTINA.

LETTER XX.



The Count de Mirepoix to Madame de St. Edmund.

Monday Morning.

MADAME de Mirepoix is much indisposed, and the only consolation of which my affliction admits is that I am emboldened by her indisposition to write a billet which will, I trust, be opened by the fairest hands in France.

I am willing, madam, that my wife
should

should owe to me the greatest pleasure of which she is at any time capable of receiving, and therefore I presume to solicit for her the favour of your company to-day. She is racked with the gout in her hands, and the pain is so violent that it induces a subsequent languor between the paroxysms of it, which is yet more difficult to bear. Your amiable attentions will divert her sense of the former, and your interesting conversation will effectually rouse her from the latter.—Ah! I know not of any state of existence which might not be made enviable by your condescending to participate in its cares. I wish to heighten the gratification which I flatter myself I shall procure for Madame de Mirepoix, by giving her the additional pleasure of surprize. Have the goodness then, madam, to favour me with one word
in

in reply to my intreaty, and I shall enjoy the idea of so unexpectedly delighting Madame de Mirepoix by your company, which she would not ask, fearing lest your benevolence should suffer a knowledge of her situation to supersede some engagement more pleasurable than that of solacing an invalid.

I am, Madam,
with the most profound respect,
and
the most sincere esteem,
your most obedient, humble servant;

EUSTACE DE MIREPOIX.

LETTER XXI.

Madame de St. Edmund to Madame de Mirepoix.

Monday Noon.

To the painful disorder in your hands, my dear madam, I have just been indebted for a billet from the count.

Believe me, I am truly sorry for the cause, particularly as I cannot shew my sympathy as I should wish, being engaged the whole of this day
on

on business for my father. To-morrow, however, I hope to be able to dedicate intirely to you, and shall be very happy if my company prove the slightest consolation to you, under your present indisposition; it will, perhaps, be more valuable at a time when, I think, you will not have that of the count, who I believe will then be in the country.

Adieu, my dear madam. The time will appear long to me until I can personally assure you of the concern with which the knowledge of your sufferings has inspired

Your's most affectionately,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXII.

Henry de Tourville to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

Do not, my much-beloved and respected mother, censure me for appearing to loiter away, in the pursuit of pleasure, that time which duty and inclination (had I alone consulted them) would, long ere this, have urged me to dedicate to my
parents

parents and Belle-vue. Believe me, my stay here has been, and for two or three weeks longer will continue to be, unavoidable: indeed nothing but the most absolute necessity should have detained me for one moment from a home which is endeared to me by the tenderest recollections, and from which I have already been estranged too long.

Ah ! my dear mother, what charms are contained for the feeling heart in the word home !

Man, wretched man, has need of some asylum from his griefs: he looks round the world, and sickens at the chilling selfishness by which his warmest sympathies are repelled;—he remembers his home, and his heart again expands; it tells him that he is not alone upon the earth: ah !

no ;

no ; a happy home is a terrestrial heaven ! The most fortunate man is an object of pity if he have not a little circle which affection and sympathy have endeared to him, and in which he can recount his successes and excite a participation in his rejoicings.

Even pain may be more supportable than pleasure, if either must be borne alone. We naturally wish to spare those whom we love, a knowledge of the pangs which may afflict our own hearts ; but when rapture dilates the bosom, its sighs proclaim its desire that those dear to it should participate in its transports. Concealment of pain is the effort of fortitude ; but to enjoy pleasure alone, is to indulge selfishness.

My vexation on being detained
here

here would be insupportable had I only the society of strangers ; but I am much consoled by that of Seymour, my earliest and my most valued friend, whose warm attachment to me expands my heart, by inspiring in it the liveliest sensations of gratitude and delight.

It is not, however, to him alone, that I am indebted for pleasing sensations, though I have been ungallant enough to mention his claims on my regard, previous to acknowledging those of my lovely cousins ; and yet this was only because you are a stranger to Seymour's worth, and cannot be so to theirs. Indeed it is impossible for me to describe to you how much I am charmed with them. How fortunate you were to be so long blessed with their society ! Why did not you immediately send an
express

express for me on their arrival at Belle-vue? Or at least you might have been more animated in your description of them. I acknowledge that you informed me they were beautiful, and not more beautiful than good; but I have seen so many women who possessed beauty without being amiable, who were good without being interesting, that these general expressions created in me no uncommon expectations.

Though Eugenia had lost every remembrance of me, I recollected her immediately. The influence of time appeared more striking in Clementina, whom I have never seen since she was quite a child; but in neither the one nor the other are the expressions of countenance, or tones of voice, in the least altered. These awaken in me the most affectionate remembrances

remembrances of our infantile sports, and the mixed emotions which are excited in my breast on recollecting the innocence and simplicity of their childhood, which I now see united to the sensibility and dignity of maturity, are as delightful as they are new. I am thought to resemble Eugenia so much, that I am often addressed as her brother. I confess that I am flattered when this is the case, and should be yet more so could I hope that my resemblance to her extended also to the virtues and talents, with which she is so liberally endowed.

You know that I am not in the least acquainted with Monsieur de St. Edmund. I own the situation in which I have found his wife, does not add to my esteem for him; though having previously formed a favourable opinion

opinion of him, perhaps his behaviour does not excite in me the abhorrence which I should feel for similar conduct in any other, while there can certainly be few who would be less excusable: but this shews the injustice of prepossessions, and the difficulty of conquering them. Perhaps those which I feel for him are strengthened by the good offices of his friends, who are numerous, and apparently much attached to him; they say he has but one failing: what that failing is, his recent conduct leaves no room to conjecture. But while they seek to excuse in him this single foible, they forget that a man who has only one fault is too often governed by it intirely, and is thus hurried on to excesses alike prejudicial to society and to himself; whilst another may be subject to many failings, but a slave to few,

for

for the strength of each being weakened by division, they may become more irksome to himself than injurious to others; and Montaigne truly observes that "the torrents which divide themselves into many streams are the least dangerous." The good natured world judges, however, good naturedly where it is not immediately concerned, and is very lenient towards faults by which it does not suffer.

But if many endeavour to exculpate him, all agree in praising her whom he has so unjustly left, whom he has exposed to the sneers of malice and envy, and the attacks of the thoughtless or licentious. The respect which she universally inspires, even in this trying and delicate situation, is, however, a pleasing and convincing proof that virtuous conduct will

will always be admired, even by those who may have ceased to practise it; and indeed her example shines with redoubled lustre when contrasted with the darkness amidst which it is displayed. Equally removed from austerity or levity, she neither shuns nor courts society. Her chief intimate is the Countess de Mirepoix, who is very amiable, and whose husband is one of Monsieur de St. Edmund's oldest friends. His attentions to Eugenia are so excessive, that I sometimes think they are painful to her; she of course attributes them intirely to his regard for her husband; but if I mistake not, they originate in motives more tender than even he is aware of.

I flatter myself that this remark has been made by me alone, and I hope that it will not be made by
any

any other. The known intimacy of the Count de Mirepoix with Monsieur de St. Edmund, prevents the suspicion of superficial observers : but the friendship of the dissolute, is too often only a partnership of vice, which is dissoluble at pleasure, on the occurrence of separate interests ; and Monsieur de St. Edmund could ill upbraid the count with following the example which his own conduct has so unhappily afforded. The only difference between the two is, that the former errs through vanity, and the latter through sensibility. Not that I mean in the least to excuse the perfidy of the count in abusing the absence of his friend ; in this instance, however, it will be accompanied by its own punishment ; for to love Eugenia hopelessly (and whoever loves her in her present situation must, from her pure ideas of rectitude, love hopelessly)

hopelessly) is surely punished severely enough for greater errors than that of admiring perfections like her's.

But I must not suffer my fair cousins to engross the whole of my attention, however great their claims on it may be. Present my tenderest regards to my dear father, and tell him that I shall have the pleasure of increasing his library, as I am not only enabled to present him with the principal works of all the most esteemed English authors of the present day, but have likewise been so fortunate as to procure some scarce and valuable editions of the classics, of which I know he has long been in search.

How happy shall I be in dedicating once more my mornings to him, and
my

my evenings to my mother, particularly her favourite hour of twilight, when, outward objects fading on the sight, the contemplative mind exerts its own powers in supplying stores for reflection or conversation !

Adieu, my dear mother ! adieu, till the wished-for and not far-distant period arrives, when you will be personally assured of the warm affection of your son

HENRY DE TOURVILLE.

LETTER XXIII.



The Count de Nirepoix to Mad. de St. Edmund.

Monday Morning.

PARDON, madam, my presumption in seeking by letter, the conversation which you so studiously avoid favouring me with in person. I appeal not to your compassion, but to your justice, which will teach you not to be severe on a transgression of which your own cruelty is the cause.

Of

Of late you have industriously shunned me ; my attentions appear to have become odious to you, and you refuse to accept from me the most trifling civilities. In what have I been so unfortunate as to offend you ? Condemn me not without informing me of my fault ; for how can I atone for that of which I am ignorant ?

If my attentions appear obtrusive or troublesome, they at least originate in my friendship for Monsieur de St. Edmund ; and if they have ever been carried to excess, they ought surely to be excused by the object towards whom they have been directed.

Madame de Mirepoix remarks the alteration in your conduct ; its coldness afflicts her, and she wearies

herself in endeavouring to conjecture the cause of it. She esteems you too highly to deserve from you even the appearance of neglect ; for her sake therefore, madam, I conjure you to wear it no longer ; for her sake I conjure you not to deprive me of your esteem ; it is necessary to my existence, and to merit the continuance of it will be the unceasing effort of one who, with every sentiment of the most profound respect and admiration, is proud to subscribe himself,

Madam,

Your most devoted servant,

EUSTACE DE MIREPOIX.

LETTER XXIV.



Mad. de St. Edmund to the Count de Mirepoix.

Monday Noon.

YOUR billet, sir, I have this moment received. It does not strictly require any answer, for it treats only of imaginary wrongs. But as I can express in a few words all that is necessary for me to say, or you to know, I will not give you reason

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to

to accuse me of a breach of politeness in observing a total silence on the occasion.

That I have of late declined your attentions I frankly acknowledge; and will as frankly add, that it was because they became too marked to continue pleasing.

The Count de Mirepoix cannot be particular to one without attracting the observation of many; and to ingross attentions in society is unjust, for whilst all behave with propriety, all have a right to expect them.

Though I may be convinced that your's towards me originates in your regard for Monsieur de St. Edmund, yet others do not know the great extent of it; and situated as I am
I ought

I ought to be particularly careful not to authorize unfavourable conjectures by conduct apparently equivocal. I must avow, moreover, that however the zeal of your friendship may manifest itself in your attentions to me, its delicacy would be more apparent in avoiding such a display of them as must certainly attract public observation.

You say that I reject from you the most trifling civilities ; let them, sir, be offered in common with those of others, and in common with them they will be accepted.

I know Madame de Mirepoix too well to fear the loss of her esteem by a conduct which, I flatter myself, is exactly what her's would be in a situation similar to mine.

Adieu,

Adieu, sir. It is my turn to request you not to be offended with my candour, and to believe that you have, and I hope will ever retain, many claims on the gratitude and esteem of

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXV.



The Count de Mirepoix to Mad. de St. Edmund.

Friday Noon.

STILL, madam, I must complain, for you are still unjust ; you break the treaty which you proposed yourself, you refuse to fulfil conditions which were laid down by yourself alone.

You expressly said, "treat me only with the attention due to any other lady,

lady, and it shall be received as from any other gentleman." I did so; for I wished to convince you of my obedience, however painful the proofs which you required of it. I will not here repeat reasons which I have often urged in vain, why I conceived myself authorized to observe towards you a conduct somewhat more marked than is due to common acquaintance only.

But I will once more appeal to your justice, and ask, if you have fulfilled your part of the engagement, as I have mine? Have I omitted any thing which you required? Have you performed any thing which you promised? If I ask you to dance, you are wearied; to sing, you are hoarse; to play at cards, you are engaged at another table; to converse, you are expected in another

ther party. Surely such a marked rejection of the most common civilities is more likely to attract observation, than an easy acceptance of them would be.

What is it that you dread? Not the censure of the world, for that which is undeserved cannot injure: still less can you fear the possibility of making M. de St. Edmund uneasy; he has proved himself superior to jealousy, by leaving an object whose charms make her so capable of creating it.

I confess that I cannot conceive how any man can possess a treasure without paying for it the tax of anxiety proportioned to its value: but I can easily imagine that he who is sufficiently a philosopher to be careless of its preservation, would not

find his fortitude desert him, even if he were to suffer a total loss of it.

Do not, however, mistake me, madam ; I am well aware that Monsieur de St. Edmund will never be so severely tried ; I wish only to remove a delicacy which is carried to fastidiousness, a prudence which degenerates into suspicion : either of these is unworthy of the mind of Madame de St. Edmund ; suffer me, then, to hope that the native liberality of that mind will be once more permitted to expand, and extend to him whose highest ambition is the privilege of subscribing himself,

Madam,

Your most devoted humble servant,

EUSTACE DE MIREPOIX.

LETTER XXVI.



Mad. de St. Edmund to the Count de Mirepoix.

Wednesday Morning.

I FEEL, sir, that I am degrading myself by writing a second time on a subject which I had hoped for your own sake you would never more have presumed to mention.

By what right you criticise my actions is unknown to me, and I regret

gret that I ever condescended to explain their motives to you.

You said that something was due to you as Monsieur de St. Edmund's friend : as such I treated you, until I thought your claim to that title was rendered doubtful by your conduct. I then exerted the privilege of behaving to you as to any other acquaintance ; and accordingly declined your civilities with those of many others, because I received no gratification from them.

I was not prevented from accepting them by fear of the censure of the world ; for though I think that a certain deference is due to its opinions from those who live in it, and share its benefits, yet the fear of my own reproach will, I trust, be ever
greater

greater than that of the reproach of others.

Neither am I afraid that your attentions to me would make Monsieur de St. Edmund uneasy : I know him, and am flattered by the proper confidence which he reposes in me, though you with equal cruelty and indelicacy insinuate that this arises solely from indifference. I am persuaded that my welfare will never cease to interest him ; and however jealousy may be in your opinion a proof of affection, in mine it is an insult, at least after marriage ; for before that union, it is generally deemed, and sometimes, indeed, is a compliment to the object by which it is inspired. Before marriage it may be the offspring of anxiety ; but after, it can only be that of distrust.

The

The merit; however, of studying the ease of Monsieur de St. Edmund in this instance, is not mine; I only consult my own in rejecting the adulation of a person who is indifferent to me, and in declining attentions which are equally wearisome and absurd.

I am sorry that you will oblige me to appear ungrateful and unpolite. Suffer me, I conjure you, to esteem you again as I once did. Let me intreat you to resume the conduct which you formerly observed, and which was much more honourable to yourself, and flattering to me, than that which has lately offended me; and which, if continued, will have no other effect than to render my further residence in Paris equally unpleasant and improper. The re-
spect

spect which I owe to myself, will then necessarily oblige me to seek some other abode, where I may at least be free from insult.

I trust that you are too generous to force me to a step so hostile to my wishes; and in the full hope that this painful subject may never be renewed, I remain, sir,

Your most obedient,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXVII.



The Count de Mirepoix to Mad. de St. Edmund.

Wednesday Noon.

To add insult to cruelty, madam, mockery to injustice, is what I did not expect from the gentleness of your disposition, nor did I deserve it in return for the sincerity of my regard. But why should I use a term so inadequate to the expression of my feelings? I will say, in return
for

for the excess of my passion, which I will no longer attempt to disguise : madam, I love you !

You cannot deprive me of the pleasure I feel in tracing the words, ' I love you ; ' I repeat them, I gaze enraptured on them, and let it be the odious task of prudery and coldness to obliterate them from the paper, they cannot be erased from my heart, any more than can the resolution which is imprinted on it, to follow you throughout the world. Am not I the master of my steps, as much as you are the mistress of your actions ?

Yes, madam, your power over me is unlimited, save when you command me to forget you ; could I obey you in that instance, I should
be

be utterly unworthy of the happiness to which I aspire.

Do not drive me to desperation ; for your own sake be not too severe on me ; learn to appreciate the value of a faithful heart, instead of probing its wounds even to agony. Despair may teach me to forget what I owe to you, but your lenity can only produce beneficial effects. If I have wandered from the paths of rectitude, pardon me, and pity me for having been misled by the meteor-blaze of passion : your persuasive accents will recall me to a sense of my error ; but if you forsake me I can listen only to the voice of my despair. Do not desert me too suddenly ; for the sake of my wife I conjure you not to leave Paris whilst I am in a state of agitation already too.

too great to escape her observation ; what then would it be should I hear of your departure—how could I conceal it either from her, or from the world ? I should not even endeavour to do it ; no, they all should know my unhappiness, and who is there who will not pity it ?

Suffer me at least to see you, if but for a moment. Suffer me to extenuate my fault, or plead for its forgiveness. I ask but this favour, and I trust that you will not have the cruelty to deny it to

Madam,

Your most devoted servant,

EUSTACE DE MIREPOIX.

LETTER XXVIII

Mad. de St. Edmund to the Count de Mirepoix.

Wednesday Night.

I OPENED your billet, sir, in the hope that it contained a candid acknowledgment of your error, for such an acknowledgment might justly have been expected from a man of sense, and a gentleman. I
was

was disappointed, and have therefore returned it.

Your threat to follow me I regard as the effusion of a madman, who fancies himself living in those days of violence when force was law, and justice unknown.

Considered in this light, your insulting avowal of an unlawful passion inspires me with concern rather than anger.

But though the ravings of a maniac may be pitied, they ought to be guarded against; and I shall so far reap the benefit of living in an enlightened age and civilized society, that, on the least appearance of such a step being necessary, I shall immediately resort to the protection

protection of those laws which preserve at the same time the safety of the kingdom, and the security of the individual.

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXIX.

Madame de St. Edmund to Madame de Tourville.

Paris.

ALAS! my dear madam, how soon are the unfortunate made sensible of their situation! The absence of my husband, grievous as it is rendered by attendant circumstances, I could support in the hope of his return; but I find that the friendless must not expect protection in the gay licentious society of Paris.

I can

I can scarcely prevail on myself to inform even you, my dear aunt, that the Count de Mirepoix, who once called himself M. de St. Edmund's warmest friend, has dared to insult me with declarations of his love ! Ah ! how degraded I feel in having been condemned to hear them ! The count must certainly have imagined that he saw some levity of conduct in me, which may have encouraged him to commit such an outrage against morality, friendship, and society.

Perhaps, knowing the peculiar circumstances of Monsieur de St. Edmund's departure, he supposed that I was only lightly afflicted by it, and that the attention of another, dreadful thought ! would soon erase it intirely from my mind.

If

If I have endeavoured to appear cheerful, it has been that the world might not be induced by the display of my sorrows to censure the conduct of a man whom I esteem, and who has always behaved to me most kindly.

Even since he left me, his generosity has still continued to make me an object of envy. When I have with a heavy heart been decorated in the costly jewels which his love had lavished on me, I have often seen the desiring eyes of my female acquaintance fixed eagerly on them, and I have then forcibly felt the truth of the maxim which tells us that “before we wish for any thing belonging to another, we should inquire how far it conduces to the happiness of its possessor.” But I shall no longer raise either envy or

VOL. I. L admiration.

admiration. I will once more seek an asylum with you, my dear aunt, who for twelve months laboured to render my sister and me happy, and who will not now refuse to make me still more your debtor when I am destitute of every other aid.

The last letters from my husband were dated from Italy, where he says he shall be unavoidably detained some time longer by business. Of course I cannot flatter myself with the expectation of his return, for at least some months.

I have, however, the satisfaction to hear that Madame de Montauban remains in Dauphiné, with her relations; and I hope that by being freed from her allurements, his natural rectitude will prompt him to return to the paths of domestic happiness
with

with renewed pleasure after his temporary deviation from them. He is still kind to me in his letters, in his bounty, and in every thing but the cruel absence which leaves me solitary and unprotected.

I shall be much distressed on parting with Clementina, but my father wishes her to remain near him ; and as she is not old enough to preside alone in his house, and has no female friend in Paris with whom she wishes to reside, she intends to board for some time in the convent de Sainte Marie, where, as she is acquainted with the abbess and several of the novices, I hope she will be agreeably situated. My only regret on quitting Paris will arise from leaving her and my dear father ; the company of my acquaintance here, I can resign without a sigh.

In society we rather bear with than enjoy. We are rarely much amused, and still more rarely interested. A constant exchange of unmeaning ceremonies must weary even the most trifling, and in what is termed polite company, we cannot look for more.

Here the volubility of speech is always in proportion to the frivolity of the subjects on which it is employed; and the greatest number of words are invariably bestowed on such as are of the least importance.

But if any topic abstracted from the common ones of the day be accidentally introduced, a cautious silence is observed by the greater part of the company, lest an unwary remark might betray the speaker's ignorance, or by its tendency lead others

others to form some conjecture as to his disposition and opinions; neither of which are esteemed necessary, or even desirable to be known in that kind of society which has its foundation in self-interest, and is indebted to dissimulation for its continuance.

Even on the discussion of the follies or misfortunes of our neighbours many will be silent; though not from candour, or tenderness to the parties vilified; but they have perhaps learned from repeated and dearly-bought experience, that some of the company may kindly take the trouble to inform their absent friends of every part of the conversation except that which they themselves sustained in it; forgetting to add, that the true motives for giving the information are only that they may have
the

the pleasure of repeating their own opinions disguised as the sentiments of those whose sincerity they affect to condemn, and to witness the mortification which may be felt on the recital of them.

Do not think me severe, my dear aunt. I have learned more of the world during Monsieur de St. Edmund's absence, than in the whole of the time which I passed so happily with him.

“ A friend cannot be known in prosperity, or an enemy hidden in adversity.” When pity ceased to be a novelty, my acquaintance could see faults in me, which they had never seen before, and which probably my husband's return would immediately transform into virtues. What is now called pride in me,
would

would then be dignified with the name of fortitude; my retirement, which is now unkindly ridiculed by the volatile and inconsiderate as proceeding from an affectation of singularity, would then appear to have been suggested by motives of delicacy and prudence; my grief would not be stigmatized with the epithet of morose, but be considered as the offspring of the finest sensibility, and indeed all my actions would again be praised by that flattery of which I knew the value, even when I was the most overwhelmed by it.

Though I thought it proper to fulfil the engagements which I had formed at the time of M. de St. Edmund's departure, I resolved to make as few new ones as possible, either at home or abroad, during his absence, except with his most intimate

mate friends. This resolution offended many in a similar situation, who fancied that they saw in it a tacit reproach to their own different conduct.

Alas ! I do not wish to reprove any one ; but I own that I was mortified by the profession of sympathy from a Madame de Villefort, who is separated from a most amiable husband on account of her own extravagance and impropriety of conduct, and who said to me the other day, "Why, my dear madam, should you mope and make a recluse of yourself? Alas! society is absolutely requisite for us who are unfortunate enough to find ourselves deceived by those whose honour and duty ought to protect us, but whose unkindness and caprice leave us a prey to solitude and neglect."

The

The anger inspired by this speech might be reprehensible, perhaps it was misplaced; it was, however, only momentary, and I shall not again expose myself to the risk of offending or being offended; no, I shall now seek in the calm retirement of Belle-vue the tranquillity which I have lost amidst the tumults and dissipation of Paris.

Your amiable son has kindly hastened the dispatch of his business here, that he may be enabled to attend me to you. Through him I shall be certain of a kind reception, though I should not doubt it on my own account.

I feel infinite pleasure in anticipating the joy which the presence of your beloved Henry will diffuse

L 5 through

through the bosoms of all who know him ; and to witness the meeting of such affectionate parents with so inestimable a child, will once more, my dear aunt, gladden the heart of

Your's most sincerely,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXX.



Madame de St. Edmund to Clementina de St. Far.

Belle-vue.

ONCE more, my dear sister, I find myself in the sweet sequestered spot where we have passed together so many hours of the happiest periods of our lives. How keenly is the remembrance of them awakened at this moment ! How much more valuable do they appear when contrasted

trasted with those of anxiety which I have since experienced !

I can scarcely describe my feelings on approaching the house. When we alighted, my aunt met us at the door, and though so many years have elapsed since she saw her son, she kindly embraced me, even before she spoke to him ; for her heart abounds with the most delicate sensibility, and she knew that the unhappy are suspicious of the least appearance of neglect.

When we entered the parlour, my aunt, who, you know, loves the hour of dusk, and had extended it nearly into that of darkness, ordered lights to be brought, saying with her accustomed smile of affection and good-humour, that she should not attempt to emulate the glare to which I might
of

of late have been accustomed. Her simple and benevolent hospitality, contrasted with the cold and artificial refinements of Parisian politeness, struck me so forcibly, that I thought I could never sufficiently value so worthy a character.

She left the room almost immediately after our reception, to inform my uncle of our arrival ; for he was, as usual, in his library, and his deafness had prevented him from hearing the noise of the carriage.

I looked round the apartment, and beheld every object almost exactly as we left it. Every thing I saw, however trifling, recalled some pleasing idea : I felt my heart fill, and it would have been in vain to endeavour to suppress my tears. Henry appeared distressed by them, and

and told me in the most affectionate accents that he should consider himself as an intruder, if his mother's house appeared less my home since he had returned, than I had been accustomed to consider it in his absence. I explained to him as well as I was able the cause of my emotion, and endeavoured to appear cheerful ; however, he seemed to be infected by my gravity, and we remained silent until the entrance of my uncle dissipated every trace of melancholy.

He, good old man, threw himself with rapture into the arms of his son, who expressed his filial affection with all the grace and tenderness natural to him. Tears of joy ran down the cheeks of the former as he contemplated the fine form, and intelligent countenance of his
son,

son, who, in the most interesting manner, addressed himself alternately to his father and mother, whilst he formed the felicity of both.

It would have been cruel to damp the cheerfulness of such a scene by my grief, and indeed I could not withstand its influence, for the heaviest heart must have felt at least a momentary alleviation of its sorrows in contemplating the happiness of so worthy a family.

After a delicate repast, which was sweetened by conversation of reciprocated delight, we retired to rest. Fatigued by my journey, I fell into a sound and refreshing repose ; nor did I once awake, until early this morning, when a variety of rural sounds dissolved the charm in which my senses had been held.

The

The bright beams of the morning sun darted into my chamber, and appeared to shine with additional lustre to me who had been so long accustomed to see them only through the dark smoke of Paris. I immediately rose, determined to regain as soon as possible the time which I had for too many months wasted in idleness and dissipation.

As I went from my apartment, I met Henry, who was likewise leaving his, impatient to revisit the scenes of his infantile sports. We walked together round the gardens, shrubberies, and adjoining fields. Henry's emotions were as lively as mine, and he enjoyed the beauties of nature with as much delight. Indeed our tastes and opinions coincide on every subject, though our dispositions and tempers are perhaps totally opposite.

You

You know, my dear Clementina, that you have often blamed me for appearing too grave, and you will likewise acknowledge that Henry is more volatile even than your lively, giddy self. I begin to think that his native air has already added to his vivacity ; for I never saw him so animated in the gayest circles of Paris, as he was during our walk this morning. His complexion glowed with health, his eyes beamed happiness, and his whole countenance expressed the feelings of a sensible heart, and tranquil mind. Your Eugenia, my Clementina, would be an insensible and ungrateful being, could she see herself in the midst of such hilarity, without partaking of its effects.

Write to me, my beloved sister, and
assure

assure me that happiness is the inmate of your bosom and of my father's ; and I trust that it will not be long a stranger to that of

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXXI.



Clementina de St. Far to Madame de St. Edmund.

Sainte Marie, Paris.

THE privation of your society, my dear sister, would be insupportable to me, were I not consoled by the hope that you have already received benefit from that change which is to me so painful.

It is almost impossible to be unhappy in the company of those whom
we

we love; for the communication of our griefs naturally lightens their burthen, and the sympathy they inspire heals the wounds which their pressure had occasioned.

Your sudden departure hence has caused almost as much consternation in the world of fashion as the disappearance of the sun would have excited in the philosophical world.

As, in such a case, the moon, supposing it still to retain its light, would be inestimably valuable, and every beam would be courted with the most anxious solicitude, so I confess I was vain enough to hope that in your absence I should be followed and adored, as the brightest luminary remaining in our hemisphere.

But

But I fear, however mortifying to my vanity the confession may be, that my light is as much borrowed as that of the planet I wished to resemble. I was, I acknowledge, surrounded by a crowd of men in avowed despair, and women in concealed raptures : but the theme of their discourse was Madame de St. Edmund ; and the subject of their conversation was confined to inquiring into her motives for so cruelly deserting them. I replied to every one in the very words you taught me—that you had long promised to visit my aunt in Picardy, and when your cousin went there to see his parents, you took the advantage of his protection.

Every one seemed to think this account perfectly correct, save him alone who knew how it was to be understood. Will you be angry
with

with me, my dear sister, if I acknowledge that since your departure the Count de Mirepoix has almost gained my forgiveness? No, you cannot, when I tell you that it is by his sincere repentance, which has nearly obliterated his fault. Indeed he appears to be penetrated with the deepest contrition for his errors, and to lament unceasingly his impetuosity, which has thus driven you from your home and from your friends.

He inquires after you seldom, and then only in general terms. But his agitation when your name is pronounced sufficiently evinces the struggle which he has with his resolution in not oftener mentioning it. One day the Marchioness de Mertueil regretted the loss of your society in the most animated and friendly terms.

terms. "We were all sufficiently sensible of the pleasure diffused by Madame de St. Edmund's presence," said the Count, "without requiring to be reminded of the pain occasioned by her absence." From most men this speech would have passed merely for an effusion of gallantry, but he sighed so profoundly on concluding it, that I trembled lest his emotion should be remarked by his amiable wife, who happened to be near him; and indeed I believe that it did not intirely escape her observation, though she had too much delicacy to shew him that she had perceived it. "Madame de St. Edmund," said she, "always obliges society, for she always embellishes it;" then, addressing herself to me, she added in a low voice, "I have many obligations to her, but it is only in
her

her absence that I have known their full extent."

Yes, my dear sister, this charming woman knows the real motives of your departure, and knows how to appreciate them as she ought: many commend the propriety of your conduct, but she alone can feel all its value.

You must not accuse me of flattery, my dear Eugenia, in thus informing you of all the agreeable things which are said in your absence; it is indeed policy in me to dwell on them, that you may not perceive the barrenness of my own ideas. But you must recollect that I am now no longer in the gay world. Like many of my companions here, I have quitted it in disgust; and, like them

them also, I am not much more delighted with the abode I have chosen as a seclusion from it.

I always had an aversion from a conventual life ; I rejoice, however, that I have tried it, as for the future I shall feel that dislike founded in reason, which I before blamed myself for indulging from prejudice.

Yet I confess I know not exactly of what I would complain. If the occupations of the day afford not any pleasure, neither do they create any disgust. If they inspire no agreeable sensations, they are not the cause of any uneasiness. But to me this insipid mediocrity is more insupportable even than extreme unhappiness. To exist without feeling, appears to me to be an existence without de-

sign; and I should sometimes be wholly unconscious that I possess a higher rank in the scale of being than an oyster, did not the very absence of sensation lead me to wish for it. I will, however, give you the journal of a day, which is that of a year also; and then you can judge of the pleasure and utility of a life so employed.

At six in the morning we assemble in the chapel, and perform our devotions. We then breakfast, and afterwards work together three hours. We then retire to our separate apartments, to read or meditate until dinner, which is served exactly at twelve. During our repast, a lay-sister reads to us, and endeavours by fine sentiments and moral reflections to divert our attention from the scanty and coarse fare which is set before

fore us : for whatever complaints may have been made against religious institutions in former times, when they not only ingrossed the richest lands but took care to enjoy the first and best fruits of them, certainly in the present days the pension allotted to a nun, which might have once been amply sufficient for her maintenance, will scarcely supply her with necessaries ; therefore the vice of luxurious living is prevented, as many others are, by taking away the means of practising it. But it is sometimes fortunate that pride and poverty are on friendly terms ; for I have seen an old lady apply the former as a cordial to the latter, and digest a comfortless meal by aid of the reflection that none of her ancestors had ever procured one with any other instrument than the sword.

After dinner we have one hour given to walking, conversation, or any other amusements we may be ingenious enough to devise, for they do not present themselves very readily.

We then reassemble in the working-room, and remain there until four, when we adjourn to the chapel to repeat our devotions, perhaps not seldom merely to repeat them; for the heart is wayward, and if called on too often, will become languid and remain silent, whilst the lips continue to move in mechanical obedience.

From the time of leaving chapel until eight, are our gayest hours, when we receive the visits of our friends, or pay them to each other
in

in our respective apartments. We then sup, retire again to the chapel, and thence to repose ; which, however, we are not to indulge in long undisturbed, for at midnight it is interrupted by a summons once more to attend the chapel, where I am afraid it is too often resumed.

We then again return to our beds ; a few short hours bring day-light, and with it a repetition of the same insipid occupations and unmeaning ceremonies.

This uniformity, which would be insupportable in its continuance, is sometimes relieved as to individuals. A certain number is appointed every week to examine and administer to the wants of the poor. Some are intrusted with confidential departments in

in the household, and others are admitted to the parties of the abbess; where if there be not so much gaiety and dissipation as in those of more fashionable circles, there is at least as much envy, vanity, and dissimulation: though if the example of our good Superior were followed, these would be strangers to the community, as they are to her own bosom.

We have likewise our high-days, and holidays, the celebration of which affords amusement only to those who find that life contains but few exalted enjoyments, and therefore wisely learn to be pleased with trifles. But to me they appear so like dreaming of being merry, or the sports of children playing at feasts and festivals, that I always feel
much

much more dull on these occasions, than at any other time.

There are, however, some agreeable young ladies here as boarders who, making a virtue of necessity, devote the time of their seclusion from society, to acquiring such information and accomplishments as will enable them to appear in it afterwards with credit and advantage.

Here are also some intelligent old nuns who talk of politics and the threatening aspect of the times ; and some foolish ones who talk of love and the imaginary conquests of their youth. Some who pique themselves on high descent, and others whose merit is founded on lowly resignation.

I endeavour to be amused with
all,

all, and to serve them as much as it is in my power; but my heart only is filled with satisfaction when I see my father, or hear from you.

He visits me every evening, and is by permission sometimes accompanied by a friend; and as that title cannot in justice be denied to Mr. Seymour, I need not inform you that I often see him also.

This generous youth possesses all his country's enthusiasm of liberty, and every thing which exhibits the least appearance of a privation of it is odious to him. He calls my retirement a confinement, and endeavours to soften the rigours of it by every attention in his power. He brings me books, music, drawings, and

and renders me all these services with a benevolence so amiable, that I told him the other day if I had been confined in the Bastille with him for my keeper, I could scarcely have desired to leave a place, where I should have been treated with such distinction.

My father is extremely well, and quite cheerful, except when his brow is for a moment clouded by his anxiety to enjoy again the uninterrupted society of his daughters.

He is, however, convinced of the propriety of our temporary separation; he rejoices to hear of your amended health, and returning cheerfulness, and gives me much credit for the little inclination I discover to mingle again with the gay world;

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but

but the merit of forbearance is due to me in only a very limited degree. Your absence has involved in gloom those scenes which, when enjoyed in your society, were so delightful to me.

Ah ! believe me, my dearest sister, you are the best beloved of my heart. The joy which I receive from the expectation of any pleasure, is heightened by the hope of your participation of it ; every dread of pain is softened by the assurance of your consolation in it. You are every thing to me : my revered mistress, my loved companion, my faithful friend. Oh ! may I always be as worthy of your regard as at this moment I am grateful for the possession of it.

Write

Write to me, my Eugenia, assure me of the continuance of it, and of your welfare, two things which are essentially requisite to the happiness of your

CLEMENTINA DE ST. FAR.

LETTER XXXII.



Mad. de St. Edmund to Clementina de St. Får.

Belle-vue.

YOUR letter, my dear Clementina, has diffused additional pleasure over you Eugenia's bosom, which is rapidly recovering its serenity.

Your account of the disposal of your time in Sainte Marie entertained us, and I can easily conceive that to a mind like yours, the dearth of ideas naturally attendant on such uniformity.

uniformity must be more painful than any trial in which its powers might be called into exertion.

Tranquillity, my dear sister, is valuable only to those who have really experienced the agitation of grief; the absence of sensation is only desirable for those who have been the prey of unhappiness. This it is that constitutes the difference between youth and age. The former, sanguine and unsuspecting, will not believe in the existence of any evils which it has not experienced ; the latter, rendered cautious by suffering, is glad to resign lively enjoyments, on the condition of being exempted from severe disappointments. Never was truth more forcibly or more briefly expressed than in the words of M. Beaumont, from whose cultivated mind and polished conversation we
have

have reaped so much instruction and amusement, How often has he said, that in youth the absence of pleasure constitutes pain ; and in old age the absence of pain constitutes pleasure.

Grave as you have always thought my disposition, and as it certainly is when contrasted with the happy vivacity of yours, I can well remember the time when my feelings were more lively, and my perceptions of pleasure and pain more acute than they have been of late ; I then thought as you do now, that no life could be less desirable than one which should pass from its commencement to its close, without the occurrence of a single incident worthy of being imprinted on the memory ; without the heart once feeling the glow of transport or the swell of sorrow.

I was

I was then young and inexperienced, I therefore imagined that a life marked with all the sad vicissitudes of woe, would be more desirable to a mind possessed of sensibility, than the even tenor of that where the days glided away in perpetual uniformity.

My ideas then were undoubtedly erroneous: at least those which I entertain now are extremely opposite. I am charmed with the quiet retirement of Belle-vue; and, to insure the continuance of it, would willingly resign every expectation of again visiting Paris. The certainty that each succeeding day will be tranquil as the present, adds to my enjoyment, which is untarnished by solicitude: the peaceful stillness by which I am surrounded, communicates itself to my heart, and inspires
a phi-

a philosophic calmness of the mind, and a grateful indolence of the body.

The tender and elegant Leonard says truly, "Rural air is balsamic to a wounded mind; the charms of nature diffuse a secret calm over the soul, and hush the stormy voice of the passions."

At this delightful season of the year, every day affords new interest. Last week we were invited to the vine gathering of one of our neighbours. It was indeed a festive scene, and never were my feelings more gratified. The little children were admitted to share in the general hilarity, as a treat which had long been promised to them for the reward of obedience and good-nature. Their little hands held small baskets ornamented

mented with flowers, and filled with the choicest fruits. They solicited the company to partake, and were delighted by their acceptance of it.

The young men and women encouraged each other in the performance of their tasks, and forgot the weight of their burthens in sharing them with those to whom they were attached. The feeble attempts of age and childhood added to the general stock of labour. Smiling industry reigned throughout, and the master and mistress of the purple harvest rewarded all with the most grateful and liberal kindness.

My uncle and aunt, almost the happiest of this animated groupe, received the congratulations of their friends, on their son's return; the
old

old peasants respectfully addressed them on the pleasing subject, whilst the younger ones testified their joy by making their obeisance at a distance.

Henry, the graceful Henry, smiled on all, and conversed with all ; he sportively assisted in the labour, and afterwards made me join in the dance which was destined as its reward. When I was fatigued he seated himself by my side, and added melody to the rural music, by exerting his delightful powers of harmony on the flute ; he looked like Apollo in disguise, and, to adopt the words of the English poet, “ they would have thought who heard the strain,

“ They saw in Tempe’s vale her native maids,
“ Amidst the festal-sounding shades,
“ To some unwearied minstrel dancing.”

On

On our return home the sun set in waves of burnished gold ; the rich crimson of his track was long left in the clouds, which at length assumed an endless variety of fantastic shapes, enriched by every beauty of variegated shades. The air wafted fragrance, and the coolness of the evening-hour gently roused us from the languor occasioned by a day of burning heat.

Time is now too precious to be wasted in enervating and disturbed repose : we dedicate the refreshing hours of morning and evening to riding or walking. In the hottest part of the day I work with my aunt, and frequently in the little grove where the thick foliage defies the sun's meridian beams, whilst it refuses not admittance to the friendly zephyr.

zephyr. Henry then sometimes amuses himself in some shaded situation by angling ; but this is a sport in which he cannot prevail on me to join, and indeed I think that of late he has not appeared so passionately attached to it as he used to be. Sometimes, however, I indulge him by taking my work or a book to enliven his retirement, where I also am gratified by the cool breezes and gentle dashing of the waters.

My feelings have not often been wounded on these occasions by any great destruction of the finny tribe, for Henry does not appear to be an adept in the art to which he is so partial, as I have seen the fish, more than once, swim away with his bait whilst I have been conversing with him, even when his eyes have been fixed

fixed upon it, apparently with the greatest solicitude and attention.

The rest of our time is filled up by occasional visits and excursions; or by reading, drawing, or music; in all of which Henry is a proficient.

We are at present engaged in reading a course of English poetry; and I am enabled through his assistance to comprehend, with tolerable facility, the great and daring genius of the immortal Shakespeare, so entirely opposite to the correct and chastened one of our Racine. Henry is an enthusiastic admirer of the English poets, and I confess I think with him that the language of truth and nature never speaks so forcibly as in their works.

With

With so many pleasing and rational occupations, you will not wonder that time flies unperceived, except when, jealous of his speed, we mark his course by counting the weeks which have elapsed since we left that place of hurry and tumult which contains nothing dear to me but my father and my Clementina.

How many who have spent the whole of their lives in Paris, might on leaving it say that they had not left in it one real friend !

So rarely are virtues and talents united, that they who ever meet with such an union ought to consider themselves fortunate indeed. It too often happens that those who are generous and sincere, are so trifling that not all their good qualities can
chance

chace away the weariness which must be inevitably felt in their society : whilst, on the contrary, those who possess unbounded talents, and fascinating powers to please, as frequently mortify us by their insincerity, and disgust us by their selfishness.

Our dear cousin is, however, an instance that the talents of the head may do honour to the virtues of the heart : but examples like his are rare ; were they more numerous, society would be more desirable than its warmest admirers can consider it in its present state.

Alas ! my dear Clementina, had Monsieur de St. Edmund resembled Henry de Tourville, I should have been too happy. My heart, which overflows with affection and tenderness,

ness, would have lavished its stores on my husband ; but he rejected them when they were offered by the dictates of sincerity and delight.

I lament his unkindness, but it inspires no resentment in me. Alas ! I ought not to condemn him too hastily, for we are all liable to err, and it is difficult to judge of others impartially unless we have been tried in similar situations.

Yet we do judge ! and we even condemn ! We remember injuries too, and we resent them, though in our daily prayers we ask for forgiveness in the proportion we shew it to others.

I own that though I am unconscious of feeling malice towards any human

human being ; I never dare to use this expression, but substitute for it, “ forgive us our trespasses, and *teach* us to forgive those who trespass against us.” Alas, we all err ! and all owe to each other that forbearance which Heaven, with unwearied kindness, shews to us.

I have written until I am melancholy ! Answer this long letter, my Clementina, with one as long and more interesting. I assure you the arrival of the post forms an anxious epoch in our day. How dreadful is the increase of the troubles in Paris, and indeed throughout the kingdom ! Even Amiens has been infected by them. How alarming and terrible are the transactions which have occurred since we last parted ! The little village of Belle-vue appears

still more sweetly sequestered when I compare its calm retirement with the distracted state of the capital and large towns. I am anxious for your safety and for that of my father. I hope you have surmounted greater dangers than you will again experience; and, after the horrors which you have already witnessed and escaped, I trust that you are steeled against fear.

When will party rage consult public good? Why are the wildest opinions embraced with such indiscriminate zeal, and defended with such blind fury?

Even Henry seems to be infected by the general mania. He reproaches himself for being merely a passive spectator in a cause which seems to inspire

inspire every other person with activity, and is anxious to take up arms in vindication of the rights of his countrymen. In him freedom would gain a steady and invaluable friend : he would support her in the exercise of her real privileges, at the same time that he would discountenance every licentious abuse of them. Yet what would a single arm avail ? The unshaken rectitude, the undaunted courage, the unbiassed judgment of one man would have little influence among so many who neglect and despise every tie of religion and honour. Happily his mother's tears and his father's intreaties have hitherto restrained his ardour : he acquiesces in their wishes, and then smiles at the facility with which he is prevailed on to yield to them.

Adieu, my beloved sister! That Heaven may guard you and my dear father from every ill, is the unceasing prayer of your

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXXIII.



Clementina de St. Far to Mad. de St. Edmund,

Sainte Marie, Paris.

You say, my Eugenia, that you are happy, and that every day appears more delightful to you than that which preceded it. Believe me, I rejoice to hear this; and endeavour in thinking of it to forget that I am solitary, and that I feel every day
more

more forcibly the loss of your society, which has formed the highest gratification of my life ever since I was capable of appreciating its value.

On what subject, my dear sister, shall I write to you? I have no Arcadian scenes to paint, no mortal Apollo to extol, no Tempe's vale, or festal-sounding shades to celebrate.

But a state of the greatest apparent felicity may contain ills not discerned by its possessors till too late. There may be precipices covered with flowers, which conceal their danger from the unhappy wanderer until, arrived at their brink, he falls, and then deplores his fate in vain.

Ah!

Ah ! my dear sister, could I see any one unwarily approaching this deceitful abode of evil, and not warn him of his perils ? Would not my anxiety lead me to guard him against the possibility of danger before the probability began ? What then should I feel did I see my Eugenia, unsuspecting of harm, deceived even by her own innocence, unconsciously courting misery ? Oh ! pardon my presumption in dictating to you, who have been the dear guardian of my infancy, the loved instructress of my youth ! My ardent desire for your happiness, makes me dread an interruption to it, which, however, exists perhaps but in my own imagination. Anxiety renders me suspicious ; my conviction of your worth creates in me a fear that it cannot long be hidden from others, or
known

known without exciting the admiration so justly its due ; and my knowledge of your tenderness alarms me lest admiration from a worthy object cannot be made known to you without exciting in your bosom a sense of gratitude which may prove too tender for your repose. Ah ! Eugenia, you are too charming for the peace of others ; too susceptible for your own. Your sensibility has already heightened afflictions, let it not create them. Suffer not yourself to be pleased too long without examining into the sources of your pleasure. Can the streams be pure if the fountain be corrupt ? Oh ! no ; drink not at the poisoned spring !

You are not accountable for your actions to yourself alone, society has also claims on your consideration : it
has

has paid the tribute of unbounded admiration to your virtue, and you owe it in return a continuance of the bright example which you have given of rectitude and prudence.

For your own sake suffer your sensibility to sleep; for, situated as you are, it can only wake to misery. For my sake, I conjure you, disturb not its repose, for my existence depends on your happiness; and if I see that destroyed, I shall no longer desire to live.

Pardon me if I appear gloomy: my mind assumes the colour of the times. Ruin hovers over Paris; and rejoices to see the interests of her cause promoted by continual discord. Every day affords new instances of cruelty, perfidy, and ingratitude; the streets

N 5

resound:

resound at midnight with shrieks and execrations, and the morning light serves but to discover the atrocities which have been committed in its absence. Men now appear to be regardless of every tie, divine and human ; and the laws of the country and of humanity are equally without influence.

Unhappy France ! if this be but the commencement of thy ills, what will be thy situation and that of thy inhabitants at their completion ? As a nation and as individuals, all must fear, for none are secure.

Guilt becomes every day more daring. The most dreadful massacres take place. Pity is superseded by horror, and commiseration for the sufferers is lost in anxiety for the survivors.

I am

I am miserable on my father's account, lest he should be suspected ! You will perhaps say he cannot, for he is innocent ; but alas ! my dear sister, innocence itself is a crime in the eyes of the wicked, for the contrast exposes their inferiority, and inspires them with envy. Do not, however, be uneasy lest my father should participate in my fears ; he thinks they are groundless, and is in good health and spirits. He sees me every day as usual, and is generally accompanied by Mr. Seymour, for whom he has a sincere friendship. This lively young man says that he cannot leave France in its present interesting struggle for liberty, but must stay to mark the efforts of the human mind, and study the character of mankind in general, and of the French nation in particular. When
I hear

I hear this, I blush from a consciousness that the latter will not stand the test of too nice an investigation.

Even Voltaire, whose insidious doctrines have sprung a mine for the destruction of all religion, morality, and social order, but whom they once so madly idolized, even he characterised them as acting always either like monkies or tigers. From him this description of his countrymen is certainly not grateful. But if true, are his writings calculated to correct their levity, or soften their ferocity? Can that man be called a benefactor to his fellow-creatures, who has poisoned the principles of his cotemporaries and weakened the hopes of future ages? No; the baneful effects of his doctrines will be felt long.

long after the author of them, ceasing even to be execrated, shall be forgotten.

Adieu, my dear Eugenia! believe me to be most tenderly yours,

CLEMENTINA DE ST. FAR.

LETTER XXXIV.

Madame de St. Edmund to Clementina de St. Ear.

Belle-vue.

ALAS! my Clementina, no longer am I worthy of the epithets which you have so often affectionately bestowed on me. You must no longer consider me as your guide and monitor, but as a lost, unhappy wretch, who relies on you alone for instruction and consolation.

Your.

Your warning voice shall not be listened to in vain. My own weak heart knew its danger, which at length it fondly ceased to oppose. Clementina, I am indeed involved in all the tumults of a guilty passion; and am now seeking to expiate an involuntary fault by a repentance bordering on despair. Oh! let me shun temptation whilst I have yet the power to fly from it. I wish not to disguise my imprudence; I will not therefore endeavour to excuse it by dwelling on the circumstances of my marriage with M. de St. Edmund.

To say that I loved him could not deceive you who know that I did not, but at the same time I felt no absolute aversion from him. I married him, and many women possessing not for their husbands a more lively affection

affection than I entertained for mine, have passed through life honourably and happily.

His generous conduct before our marriage charmed me ; his behaviour afterwards was not less touching : esteem in my bosom would soon have created love, but he who planted the tree waited not for the production of its fruits. His sudden estrangement from me chilled the tender feelings which his constant presence had inspired : I looked, however, with pleasure to his return, hoping that an affectionate reception and cheerful forgiveness of his errors would prevent a repetition of them.

He came not ; and it was impossible for me to conceal from myself that

that he continually devised new excuses for the protraction of his absence. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Mine was sick indeed, but I brooded over my disappointment in silence, until I acquired habitual resignation to it.

Nature, which abhors a vacuum, feels it no where more forcibly than in the heart. Unfortunately Henry de Tourville possessed attractions too powerful not to supply that left in mine.

I long imputed to my affection for his mother, the tenderness which was in reality only inspired by his own merit; and when I could not hide from myself the partiality with which I contemplated all his actions and sentiments, I endeavoured to re-
concile

concile it to myself by asking if I did not possess the powers of discrimination and comparison; and whether I ought not to enjoy in common with others the privilege of admiring worth when I might be fortunate enough to meet with it?

Unhappily his sentiments were too responsive to my own, and were expressed with too much of the warmth and animation inherent in his temper to leave me in ignorance of them. It was not, however, until the last week, and then only by accident, that they were discovered to me in their full extent.

I had received a letter from M. de St. Edmund, in which he had assured me that as soon as there should appear a possibility of leaving
ing

ing Italy without great detriment to the affairs which he had to transact there, he would immediately return to France, to solicit my pardon for his truant behaviour, and to prove himself incapable of ever again abusing the kindness which might grant it to him.

The style of his letter was at once cheerful, polite, affectionate, and tender, yet it did not afford me the pleasure which I ought to have derived from it. Conscious that his absence of late had not caused me the uneasiness it once had, I could not read his excuses without being painfully convinced that to me they were unnecessary. The promise of his speedy return was given too late to administer pleasure. I felt that I might be justly
accused!

accused of ingratitude in acknowledging this to myself, and, shrinking from the consciousness of so odious a vice, I durst not proceed further in the investigation of my sentiments.

As I raised my tearful eyes from the paper, they met those of Henry, which were fixed on me with the most anxious inquiry. I was, however, unwilling to understand their language, and spoke not until he impatiently broke the silence by saying that my letter appeared to have afforded me much pleasure in the perusal. Surprised at a remark so exactly opposite to what he might naturally have been tempted to make, I thought that he meant it in mockery, and replied that my countenance could not lead him to think

so ;

so ; and that if he were to read my heart, he would not find any pleasurable sensations there.

Reflecting, however, that I was unjust to my husband in this speech, I felt my cheeks glow as I finished it : this increased Henry's anxiety, for he imagined that the blush of shame was that of indignation, excited by some unkind expressions in M. de St. Edmund's epistle. I therefore put it into his hands that he might be made acquainted with the nature of its contents ; for I was resolved not to add to the injustice of which I had been guilty, by suffering my silence on this probable conjecture, to confirm his suspicions.

Alas ! I ought to have foreseen the consequences of this imprudent step.

Thrown

Thrown off his guard by the prospect of my husband's immediate return, he openly lamented it as an event which would deprive him of even the happiness which he enjoyed in my society ; and complaining of the cruelty of his destiny, he intreated me to render it less severe by permitting him to entertain the hope of a continuance of my friendship in return for his unalterable and uncontrollable love !

Yes, my Clementina, the same words which excited in my breast all the indignation of offended virtue, when uttered by the Count de Mirepoix, I now heard without the power of imposing silence on him whose anguish added bitterness to mine.

I will

I will not dwell on the scene which followed. Even now I remember with horror the tender expressions to which I involuntarily listened ; and the vows which he persisted in offering to me, who had none to give in return. Alas ! I am more wretched than guilty. 'The disposal of our affections is not, perhaps, wholly in our own power ; but the degree of indulgence with which we treat them certainly is ; and I will not add to my fault, which is already too great. I have therefore determined to leave Belle-vue to endeavour to eradicate this unfortunate partiality from my bosom ; and I trust that I may yet hope to offer my husband, on his return, a heart where duty to him shall reign triumphant over love for another.

The

The daily accounts which we receive from Paris are so dreadful, that my fortitude shrinks at the idea of re-entering it. But it contains my father and my sister ; and with them I cannot be long unhappy.

It is my intention to board in the convent with you, my dear Clementina, until I again hear from M. de St. Edmund, when he will probably acquaint me with the exact period in which I may expect to see him. Until that time I shall prefer a life of retirement. Were I in my own house, the civilities of my friends would distress me, and the ceremonies of my acquaintance would be wearisome.

Your conversation, on the contrary, will beguile my sorrows, and
my

my drooping spirits, while they are sustained by your friendship, will be enlivened by your cheerfulness.

My good aunt weeps incessantly at the prospect of our approaching separation : she regrets that she is not permitted to call me her daughter. Alas ! she has always shewn to me the kindness of a mother. Her tears excite the sympathy of mine : Henry, whose vivacity is all fled, turns from us that he may conceal his emotion ; and even my uncle neglects his studies to share in our griefs. Alas ! in the short space of one week how are we all changed ! I am doubly wretched, in seeing those to whom I am so tenderly attached made unhappy on my account !

Ah! my Clementina, I love to an
excess, of which I could not have be-
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lieved myself capable: yet I love not more than I am beloved.

Adieu! Expect me immediately at Sainte Marie; and in the interim believe me still unchanged in my regard for you, and

Most affectionately yours,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXXV.

Madame de St. Edmund to Madame de Tourville.

Paris, Convent de Sainte Marie.

SINCE we parted at Amiens, my dear aunt, my tears have flowed incessantly ; and the sad scene of our adieux has never been one moment absent from my thoughts. To rise by candle-light, when every thing is still and at rest around us, throws an air of gloom and solemnity even

over the prospect of a pleasurable excursion ; what then were its effects on me the morning in which I left you, when suddenly starting from a short, disturbed sleep, and reproaching myself for even a momentary repose from the sorrows which I at once caused and felt, I began with a breaking heart to prepare for my departure?

Claudine's tears fell as fast as mine, whilst she assisted me to dress ; and we both observed a melancholy silence until the keys of the harpsichord were struck with such brilliant execution, that I immediately recognized Henry in the performer. He played all the simple and affecting airs which you and my uncle have so often delighted to hear us sing together. Never did their melody

lody appear so touching as then, when every other sound was hushed.

At length the day began to dawn. The little birds seemed to tell me in their carols that I should never more see it break at Belle-vue, and my sorrows amounted to anguish at the thought.

I stood at the window watching the grey clouds as they became gradually tinged with crimson, and saw the vapours of night dissipated by the golden beams of the sun. I imagined that the sight of the carriage which was to convey me from those whom I so tenderly loved, would relieve me by ending the suspense which had then become almost insupportable.

At

At length I heard the sound of wheels, and soon after discerned the carriage in the lane. I cannot describe my feelings. My suspense was indeed ended ; but so were my hopes : and I became additionally sensible how severe and inevitable my pangs would be on bidding adieu to a place which was so dear to me.

I remained at the window immovable until Claudine came to announce the arrival of the carriage : delay was then useless ; I threw round my chamber a hasty farewell glance and left it, scarcely sensible of what I did.

You, my dear madam, witnessed my grief on quitting your hospitable roof ; and though your kindness in accompanying me to Amiens in some
measure

measure relieved me from its excess at that moment, yet, when we parted there, it seemed to exert redoubled power over me. But all is now over, and it is become my task to forget the past. Henry's last words to me were unkind. Tell him that when he can teach me to reconcile my love to my duty, he shall not have reason to reproach me for its coldness.

I was shocked, on my arrival here, to see a great alteration in Clementina's appearance. She alarms me by complaining of a cough, and pain in her side; she is, however, kind enough to say that in my society she shall soon recover her health. Every assiduous attention to it shall be paid by me: but she has lost her spirits. Would that I had never left her!

I fear

I fear that she has not been happy in her retirement. My uncle would with difficulty recognise his smiling favorite in the pensive inhabitant of a convent.

Madame de Vaublanc, our amiable abbess, informs me that Clementina lately betrayed an inclination to take the veil, intelligence which surprised me extremely, as you know how great her dislike to that idea once was; and indeed the lively description which she gave us of the insipidity of a conventual life could not make me suspect so total a dereliction of her former opinion.

However, the decree prohibiting the profession of nuns will prevent her from thinking seriously of it, even were her mind more bent on it than

than is, I hope, the case at present. It is, perhaps, well for me that I have found my sister in a situation which, by exciting my tenderest anxiety for her, will divert me from feeling the poignancy of afflictions, on which I might otherwise find it impossible to avoid dwelling, notwithstanding my resolution to the contrary.

My father is also in a state of indisposition which shocks me the more as I was not prepared for it, Clementina's accounts of his health having been always remarkably favourable. I hope I am not the cause of such alterations in those who are so dear to me; unfortunate as I am, I should consider myself infinitely more so to see them suffer with me. For their sakes I endeavour to exert myself, but the effort is too often

o 5 unavailing.

unavailing. Conversation exhausts, and books weary me; solitude depresses, and society is irksome to me. I see none but particular friends, among the first of whom I rank Mr. Seymour. He came to visit me immediately after my arrival. He pays his daily respects to Clementina, and does not seek to conceal the tenderness with which she inspires him. This she repays with the sincerest esteem; but I cannot yet perceive in her the existence of any warmer sentiment in his favour.

He is so amiable, that I am almost persuaded to become his advocate, and am only withheld by the dread of being separated from her by the ocean. If, however, she must take up her abode in another country, none can be more agreeable to me than
England,

England, as it was there that you, my dear aunt, passed the greatest part of your youth ; it is a country to which I know you are partial, and with the manners, language, and literature of which you have made us well acquainted.

Adieu ! my dear madam. In writing to you I seem to forget that I no longer enjoy your conversation ; I will endeavour to prove that I do not forget your precepts, by the firmness with which I shall accustom myself to the practice of them.

Once more adieu ! and believe me to remain, my beloved aunt,

Most affectionately yours,

EUGENIA DE ST. EDMUND.

LETTER XXXVI.

Madame de Tourville to Madame de St. Edmund.

Belle-vue.

YOUR letter, my dear child, awakened all my regrets for your departure, and nothing can reconcile me to it but the hope that our temporary separation will occasion us to meet again with increased pleasure. I will not dwell on the alteration which the loss of your society has
made

made in our little circle : suffice it to say that you can have no sensations in which we do not all sincerely sympathize.

You must acknowledge, however, that in our late parting, the advantages were all on your side. Those who leave their friends, are never so deserving of pity, as those who are left. We could not travel in imagination with you to Paris half so correctly as you could follow us back to Belle-vue : you were involuntarily amused for the moment by change of scene, while we were depressed by its unvaried sameness. The only alteration which we witnessed was your vacant chair, and that too forcibly reminded us of our loss : the absence even of your books, work-box, and drawing implements,
all

all added to our sense of it, and we could not even supply the deficiency of your society by partaking in idea of your occupations. The regularity of our habits is such, that you can always know precisely our engagements ; and memory can picture them with such exactness, that you may almost forget the scene is painted only on your imagination.

Would that the efforts of my fancy may be realized ! By many of them I see you smiling in health and tranquillity : complete my happiness by telling me that in so pleasing an idea I am not wandering from reality

Demosthenes, on being asked three several times, what was the principal requisite in oratory, always replied *action*. Were I asked what is the surest remedy
for

for sorrow, I should make the same answer, though in a different sense of the word. Apply then, my Eugenia, to this remedy : you will find its effects certain, though they may be slow. It will become every day more agreeable, and its effects will be proportionably more beneficial.

I am not surprised that you find reading wearisome and uninteresting to you : books are rather to be resorted to as the useful and elegant recreation of a mind at ease, than as a serviceable occupation to one in distress. In that state it is impossible to give to them the degree of attention which is necessary to make their contents interesting, as our thoughts are then drawn every instant from the subjects on which they treat, to dwell on those of our own sorrows. The mind is only
irritated

irritated by a too forcible abduction of the privilege of reflecting on events of which the impression is unimpaired; but by any trifling manual employment it is gently amused without being disturbed. I know from experience that study is painful to the unhappy; but our sex has a peculiar advantage in those occupations where the mechanical movement of the fingers seems to divert the feelings of the mind: it is indeed an observation of an English philosopher, and no less ingenious than true, that many men would have been rescued from despair if they had known how to hem a pocket-handkerchief.

You will not despise these arguments, my dear child, however trifling they may appear to many: recollect that

that on trifles much of our comfort depends, and I could, perhaps, say more to you did I feel less: I trust, however, that you know the hearts of all whom you have left here. I need not say that you are dear to all of them, and to none more than to

Your affectionate aunt,

SOPHIE DE TOURVILLE.

END OF VOL. I.

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